
*Essays
of Our
Times*

Brown



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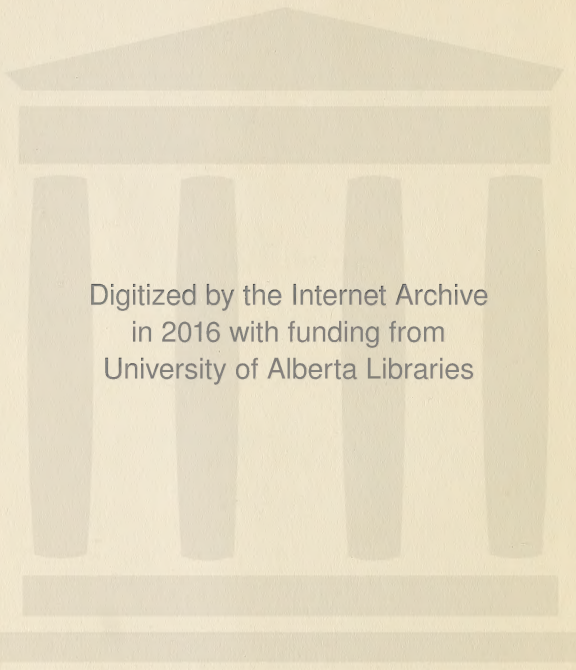
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May God save you.



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Essays of Our Times

SELECTED AND EDITED

BY

SHARON BROWN

BROWN UNIVERSITY



TORONTO

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PREFACE

The essays which compose this volume have been selected primarily as illustrations of contemporary modes in the essay form; secondarily, as studies in contemporary thought and manners. Hence the book may be used for either or both of the following purposes: (1) as a pleasant introduction to the appreciation of a literary form; (2) as a group of readings on current problems.

No attempt has been made to group the essays in some pretty but artificial scheme. Inasmuch as the editor has no desire to propound a theory of the essay or to formulate a philosophy of contemporary civilization, but rather to furnish student and teacher with the raw material for some such synthesis, it has seemed advisable to list the essayists in alphabetical order. Such a plan is free from partiality and certainly makes for convenience of reference.

By way of warning it should be frankly stated that the editor, in seeking essays for purposes of discussion, has not attempted to avoid subjects of sharply controversial nature. Were none of these essays to challenge the convictions of a single reader, they would have to be a sterile lot indeed. On the contrary, the effort has been to uncover opinions which should provoke acrid disagreement—of such stuff is good discussion made!

Footnotes have been provided wherever explanation seems called for; but words found in the dictionary have not usually been annotated.

The customary acknowledgments for permission to reprint copyrighted material appear in the proper places; but no conventional formula can express the sincerity of the editor's gratitude to the authors and publishers who have met his requests with invariable courtesy and helpfulness.

Recognition is also due to Dr. Benjamin C. Clough, of Brown University, who originally undertook the preparation of this volume and whose judgment is responsible for several of the selections.

Deepest of all is the editor's indebtedness to the constant and intimate coöperation of a collaborator who prefers to remain nameless.

S. B.

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1. Informational article
2. thesis
3. Technical

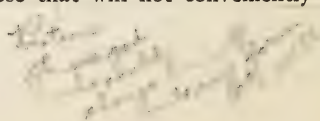
INTRODUCTION

Essays and essayists—the two are inseparable. The personal essay, the essay *en pantoufles*, invites the reader to comfortable converse at the writer's fireside; the more formal essay may suggest the lecture room, the editorial page, or the pulpit, without foregoing altogether the presence of its creator, felt rather than seen. Both personal and formal essays are, in varying degrees, expressions of personality which bring us closer to their makers than any other form of prose.

At its most typical, which is its most personal, the essay is a lively document out of the thought and experience of a man's life, and gives free entry not merely to casual acquaintance with its author but often to such immediate and intimate understanding of his opinions, fancies, and emotions as the closest friendship can scarce afford. For the essay is, as Christopher Morley has excellently observed, "a mood rather than a form." In essence it is something between a lyric and a conversation: it has the lyric's clairvoyant power to reveal the truth in a flash of insight, and it has the mellow human quality of all good talk. As it tends away from these traits it tends toward the informational article in which the element of personality is suppressed. But unless the piece in question is an encyclopedia article, or a technical exposition, or a thesis, the stamp of the author's personality is discernible. Huxley, Ruskin, and Thoreau all wrote informing essays about nature, but with what wide differences! Carlyle and Newman both wrote formal reflective essays, but their books are as different as the two men.

Within the limits indicated above, the range of the essay is wide. Evidence of that fact is furnished by the pages of this book. H. W. Nevins, after a lifetime of newspaper work, tells how it feels to retire from the glamour of Fleet Street to suburban domesticity. With Miss Macaulay we strive gaily to live life to the full. Max Beerbohm confides to us the ghost of a reminiscence recalled from his youth. Other essayists, more reticent, will not play the egoist for us, but we are none the less aware of the savor of their personalities. Randolph Bourne exhales the freshness of a fearless adventurer among intellectual things. Galsworthy's definition of "quality" subtly reveals his own warm sympathies. "The Jungle Sluggard" purports to be only a zoölogical study, but it proclaims aloud the enthusiastic and insatiable curiosity of its scientist-author, William Beebe. Other essays, still further de-personalized in form, are yet the raw materials for a personal philosophy. Stuart Chase subjects to his questioning mind our scientific achievements, our business ideals, our material comfort, our "civilization." Professor Jacks strenuously challenges the life of leisure; Lincoln Colcord offers quietism as an escape from the life of activity. Finally, there are essays on war and peace, education, economics, in which the revelation of personality is almost wholly subordinated to the purposes of criticism, instruction, or persuasion.

If, then, all these writings, frivolous or thoughtful, revealing or reticent, condensed or rambling, philosophical, lyrical, emotional, didactic, analytical, descriptive, narrative, critical, biographical, what you will—if all these may be called essays, what exactly is an essay? No definition perhaps is spacious enough to contain a form so protean, a spirit so elusive. One can only set down without risk of contradiction that an essay is any shortish piece of prose that will not conveniently fit



into a narrower category. In other words, it may be anything and everything, provided only that it is not definitely something else!

.

At its inception the English essay was little more than idea. In the writings of Francis Bacon, the first essayist in English and a contemporary of Shakespeare, the ideas are pared to the brevity and crispness of aphorisms. His close-packed pages are the jottings of a wise man's notebook. Throughout the seventeenth century men practiced the new art of essay-writing with small evidence that they guessed its possibilities of entertainment; the majestic exaltations of Sir Thomas Browne or the curious introspections of Robert Burton, author of *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, are saturated with the solemnity of their times. Only Izaak Walton, in the unaffected pages of *The Compleat Angler*, showed the lightness of touch which was to mark later essayists. Yet it is an odd fact that, two centuries later, Charles Lamb, whose touch was lightest of all, borrowed much of his charming style from Browne and Burton.

The eighteenth century brought Jonathan Swift, whose venomous hostilities, poured into innumerable pamphlets, lent the essay the festering sting of satire. But it remained for Joseph Addison and Richard Steele to create, in the *Spectator* papers, the type of art which one ordinarily thinks of as the essay. These two friends, diverse in temper but alike in underlying kindliness, discovered how to amuse their readers without abandoning wholly the didactic aims of their predecessors. Beneath the pleasant humors of their creatures, Sir Roger de Coverley and his friends, there is ever a hint of gentle ridicule directed at the foibles of society. It is significant that this first notable success in the essay was coin-

cident with the invention of the periodical. The pamphlet had furnished an occasional vehicle for the essay, but the periodical was to prove a regular medium for its publication and to play the largest part in its subsequent development. Yet none of the many periodicals which sought to imitate *The Spectator* in the remainder of the eighteenth century could recapture its freshness—least of all the ponderously dull *Idler* and *Rambler* of Samuel Johnson.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century and simultaneously with a reaction against classical restraints, there arose a new school of essayists influenced largely by the romantic critical theories of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The greatest of these was Charles Lamb, who humanized literary criticism and became the unrivaled master of the familiar essay at its finest and richest. Others of this group were William Hazlitt, pungent and energetic critic of literature and of life; Thomas De Quincey, weaver of opium dreams; and Leigh Hunt, versatile and prolific journalist and dramatic critic. These men understood the art of conversation, and in transferring it to their pages they did not hesitate to talk about themselves.

With the advance of the Victorian Age the essay turned again to more serious themes. Thomas Babington Macaulay, in readable and forthright prose, immensely strengthened the reputation of the essay as a medium for history, biography, and literary criticism. Social, industrial, and spiritual questions began to occupy the attention of thinkers, who, choosing the essay form, earnestly and volubly proclaimed their several doctrines of salvation. The giants among them are Thomas Carlyle, with his reckless enthusiasms and magnificent sincerity; Matthew Arnold, whose conception of culture opposed narrow-minded Philistinism; John Ruskin, who made art and economics alike moral; John Henry Newman, whose example led many to sink their perplexities in the supreme consistency of faith. A little apart from these stands Walter

Pater, aesthète and art critic. At the end of the century, Robert Louis Stevenson, disregarding his rather solemn predecessors, revived the gentler and jauntier moods of the essay.

Thus, the English essay looks back today upon three hundred years during which it has alternated between dull and sparkling, profound and ephemeral, didactic and diverting. Small wonder that a literary form so sensitive to changes in public taste should have assumed these many guises without finally achieving a single and readily recognizable character.

.

True to its past performance, the essay has, since the turn of the century, shown a tendency to adapt itself to contemporary taste. Let it be clearly understood that only a tendency, a general drift, is here indicated. As in the past, the "typical" essay of the period is but the most conspicuous of many prevailing patterns—essays of all sorts are being written today just as they have always been written since 1700. So far, then, as the foregoing proviso will permit a description of the twentieth-century essay, let us say that, especially in the United States, it is "practical." For, rightly or wrongly, the essay-reading public manifests a somewhat materialistic taste. With the crowding questions of government, economics, and social relations born of our complex civilization and intensified by the impulse of a World War, it is perhaps inevitable that the purely cultural concerns of a simpler and more leisurely time should have been forced into second place. The speeding up of communication, the disconcerting efficiency of the press, the multiplying of books, periodicals, and other sources of information, the growth of public libraries, the vast gains in knowledge, especially in science, have made it physically impossible for the modern reader to take in all that is offered him. Often he must choose between practical and

cultural. Can he be blamed if, in the natural desire to "keep up with the world," he more frequently chooses the former?

By the term "practical" no derogation is intended. The new essay, concerned though it is with such matters as the World War, democracy, science, psychology, or industry, is every whit as truly an essay as the pleasant discursions of a Charles Lamb. Each type of essay is faithful in style and in subject-matter to the taste of the time in which it was written. Only, a shift of emphasis has taken place. One is satisfied to read Lamb's "Old China" for the style, the flavor—which is the man. The ideas are, in any material appraisal, slight and inconsequential. The essay of the twentieth century, on the other hand, has become more a thing of substance than a thing of style. The ideas are struck white hot from the events of the moment—note the timeliness of "The Dogma of 'Business First'" by Stuart Chase; and they must be important ideas; often they are controversial in character—not everyone will agree with Bertrand Russell's educational theories. Style, though subordinated to thought, is not neglected: it must be swift, sharp, direct; neither extremely formal nor extremely informal.

The traditional essay is still, of course, to be reckoned with, especially in England, where literary as well as political history "broadens down from precedent to precedent." America may be throwing over a cultural tradition before she ever had one—a European has unkindly observed that "the Americans are becoming decadent without having first reached maturity." However that may be, English literary taste is, on the whole, more conservative, and there is still no lack of essayists schooled in the elegant humanities of Oxford and Cambridge who keep alive the practice of belles lettres, unmoved in a world of turmoil.

Whether we regard the gentle essay of taste and feeling

or the hard and sinewy essay of purpose we still find (to return to our starting point) the element of personality. If we fail quite to discover some hint of the manner of man that wrote it, we are reading not an essay but a mere vehicle of information, destitute of the thrilling and inspiring presence of personal emotion or conviction. Montaigne, the French lawyer whose *Essais* probably suggested to Bacon both a form and a name, summed it all up when he wrote, "It is myselfe I pourtray."

WILLIAM BEEBE

(Charles) William Beebe, naturalist, explorer, and writer, was born at Brooklyn, N. Y., in 1877. He was graduated from Columbia in 1898. As Director of Tropical Research of the New York Zoölogical Society, a curator of the American Museum of Natural History, and head of a research laboratory in the jungles of British Guiana, he has become the foremost American authority on tropical birds. His scientific voyages in the *Arcturus* to Galápagos and the Sargasso Sea have enriched the world's knowledge with descriptions of deep-sea fishes and the fauna of strange lands.

His real distinction, however, is his extraordinary felicity of style, which enables him, as no one else since Huxley, to make the facts of science as vivid to the lay reader as the most thrilling fiction. This gift, first manifested in his nature essays in *The Atlantic Monthly*, has given him a popularity which challenges that of the most widely-read novelists.

His more important books are *Jungle Peace* (1918); *The Edge of the Jungle* (1921); *Galápagos: Land's End* (1924); *Jungle Days* (1925), from which the following essay is taken; *The Arcturus Adventure* (1926); and *Pheasant Jungles* (1927).

Mr. Beebe combines exact scientific knowledge with an admirable feeling for the sensory image. In his pages one catches, not only the sights and smells and sounds, but the magic spell itself of his beloved jungles.

THE JUNGLE SLUGGARD*

WILLIAM BEEBE

Sloths have no right to be living on the earth today; they would be fitting inhabitants of Mars, where a year is over six hundred days long. In fact they would exist more appropriately on a still more distant planet where time—as we know it—creeps and crawls instead of flies from dawn to dusk. Years ago I wrote that sloths reminded me of nothing so much as the wonderful Rath Brother athletes¹ or of a slowed-up moving picture, and I can still think of no better similes.

Sloths live altogether in trees, but so do monkeys, and the chief difference between them would seem to be that the latter spend their time pushing against gravitation while the sloths pull against it. Botanically the two groups of animals are comparable to the flower which holds its head up to the sun, swaying on its long stem, and, on the other hand, the over-ripe fruit dangling heavily from its base. We ourselves are physically far removed from sloths—for while we can point with pride to the daily achievement of those ambulatory athletes, floor-walkers and policemen, yet no human being can cling with his hands to a branch for more than a comparatively short time.

Like a rainbow before breakfast, a sloth is a surprise, an unexpected fellow breather of the air of our planet. No one could prophesy a sloth. If you have an imaginative friend who has never seen a sloth and ask him to describe what he thinks it ought to be like, his uncontrolled phrases will fall far short of reality. If there were no sloths, Dunsany would

*From *Jungle Days*. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1925. Reprinted by permission of the author and the publishers.

¹Rath Brother athletes, "slow-motion" acrobats of the American stage.

hesitate to put such a creature in the forests of Mluna,² Marco Polo would deny having seen one, and Munchausen would whistle as he listened to a friend's description.

A scientist—even a taxonomist³ himself—falters when he mentions the group to which a sloth belongs. A taxonomist is the most terribly accurate person in the world, dealing with unvarying facts, and his names and descriptions of animals defy discretion, murder imagination. Nevertheless, when next you see a taxonomist disengaged, approach him boldly and ask him in a tone of quarrelsome interest to what order of Mammalia sloths belong. If an honest conservative he will say, "Edentata," which, as any ancient Greek will tell you, means a toothless one. Then if you wish to enrage and nonplus the taxonomist, which I think no one should, as I am one myself, then ask him "Why?" or, if he has ever been bitten by any of the eighteen teeth of a sloth.

The great savant Buffon, in spite of all his genius, fell into most grievous error in his estimation of a sloth. He says, "The inertia of this animal is not so much due to laziness as to wretchedness; it is the consequence of its faulty structure. Inactivity, stupidity, and even habitual suffering result from its strange and ill-constructed conformation. Having no weapons for attack or defense, no mode of refuge even by burrowing, its only safety is in flight. . . . Everything about it shows its wretchedness and proclaims it to be one of those defective monsters, those imperfect sketches, which Nature has sometimes formed, and which, having scarcely the faculty of existence, could only continue for a short time and have since been removed from the catalogue of living beings. They are the last possible term amongst creatures of flesh and blood, and any further defect would have made their existence impossible."

If we imagine the dignified French savant himself naked,

²*Mluna*, a mountain range in the Land of Dream, a fantastic country in the stories of Lord Dunsany.

³*taxonomist*, one versed in the science that treats of the systematic classification of organisms.

and dangling from a lofty jungle branch in the full heat of the tropic sun, without water and with the prospect of nothing but coarse leaves for breakfast, dinner, and all future meals, an impartial onlooker who was ignorant of man's normal haunts and life could very truthfully apply to the unhappy scientist, Buffon's own comments. All of his terms of opprobrium would come home to roost with him.

A bridge out of place would be an absolutely inexplicable thing, as would a sloth in Paris, or a Buffon in the trees. As a matter of fact it was only when I became a temporary cripple myself that I began to appreciate the astonishing lives which sloths lead. With one of my feet injured and out of commission I found an abundance of time in six weeks to study the individuals which we caught in the jungle near by. Not until we invent a superlative of which the word *deliberate* is the positive can we define a sloth with sufficient adequateness and briefness. I dimly remember certain volumes by an authoress whose style pictured the hero walking from the door to the front gate, placing first the right, then the left foot before him as he went. With such detail and speed of action might one write the biography of a sloth.

Ever since man has ventured into this wilderness, sloths have aroused astonishment and comment. Four hundred years ago Gonzalo de Oviedo⁴ sat him down and penned a most delectable account of these creatures. He says, in part: "There is another strange beast the Spaniards call the Light Dogge, which is one of the slowest beasts, and so heavie and dull in mooving that it can scarcely goe fiftie pases in a whole day. Their neckes are high and streight, and all equall like the pestle of a mortar, without making any proportion of similitude of a head, or any difference except in the noddle, and in the tops of their neckes. They have little mouthes, and moove their neckes from one side to another, as though they were astonished; their chiefe desire and delight is to

⁴Gonzalo de Oviedo (1478-1557), a Spaniard who wrote a history of the West Indies in fifty books.

cleave and sticke fast unto trees, whereunto cleaving fast, they mount up little by little, staying themselves by their long claws. Their voice is much differing from other beasts, for they sing only in the night, and that continually from time to time, singing ever six notes one higher than another. Sometimes the Christian men find these beasts and bring them home to their houses, where also they creepe all about with their natural slownesse. I could never perceive other but that they love onely of Aire; because they ever turne their heads and mouthes toward that part where the wind bloweth most, whereby may be considered that they take most pleasure in the Aire. They bite not, nor yet can bite, having very little mouthes; they are not venemous or noyous any way, but altogether brutish, and utterly unprofitable and without commoditie yet known to men."

It is difficult to find adequate comparisons for a topsy-turvy creature like a sloth, but if I had already had synthetic experience with a Golem,⁵ I would take for a formula the general appearance of an English sheep dog, giving it a face with barely distinguishable features and no expression, an inexhaustible appetite for a single kind of coarse leaf, a gamut of emotions well below the animal kingdom, and an enthusiasm for life excelled by a healthy sunflower. Suspend this from a jungle limb by a dozen strong hooks, and—you would still have to see a live sloth to appreciate its appearance.

At rest, curled up into an arboreal ball, a sloth is indistinguishable from a cluster of leaves; in action, the second hand of a watch often covers more distance. At first sight of the shapeless ball of hay, moving with hopeless inadequacy, astonishment shifts to pity, then to impatience, and finally, as we sense a life of years spent thus, we feel almost disgust. At which moment the sloth reaches blindly in our direction, thinking us a barren, leafless, but perhaps climbable tree, and

⁵*Golem*, a figure made to represent a man; said to have been made and endowed with life at Prague in the Middle Ages; hence, anyone who acts like an automaton.

our emotions change again, this time to sheer delight as a tiny infant sloth raises its indescribably funny face from its mother's breast and sends forth the single tone, the high, whistling squeak, which in sloth intercourse is song, shout, converse, whisper, argument, and chant. Separating him from his mother is like plucking a bur from one's hair, but when freed, he contentedly hooks his small self to our clothing and creeps slowly about.

Instead of reviewing all the observations and experiments which I perpetrated upon sloths, I will touch at once the heart of their mysterious psychology, giving in a few words a conception of their strange, uncanny minds. A bird will give up its life in defending its young; an alligator will not often desert its nest in the face of danger; a male stickleback fish will intrepidly face any intruder that threatens its eggs. In fact, at the time when the young of all animals are at the age of helplessness, the senses of the parents are doubly keen, their activities and weapons are at greatest efficiency for the guarding of the young and the consequent certainty of the continuance of their race.

The resistance made by a mother sloth to the abstraction of its offspring is chiefly the mechanical tangling of the young animal's tiny claws in the long maternal fur. I have taken away a young sloth and hooked it to a branch five feet away. Being hungry it began at once to utter its high, penetrating penny whistle. To no other sound, high or low, with even a half tone's difference does the sloth pay any heed, but its dim hearing is attuned to just this vibration. Slowly the mother starts off in what she thinks is the direction of the sound. It is the moment of moments in the life of the young animal. Yet I have seen her again and again on different occasions pass within two feet of the little chap, and never look to right or left, but keep straight on, stolidly and unvaryingly to the high jungle, while her baby, a few inches out of her path, called in vain. No kidnaped child hidden in moun-

tain fastness or urban underworld was ever more completely lost to its parent than this infant, in full view and separated by only a sloth's length of space.

A gun fired close to the ear of a sloth will usually arouse not the slightest tremor; no scent of flower or acid or carrion causes any reaction; a sleeping sloth may be shaken violently without awakening; the waving of a scarlet rag, or a climbing serpent a few feet away brings no gleam of curiosity or fear to the dull eyes; an astonishingly long immersion in water produces discomfort but not death. When we think what a constant struggle life is to most creatures, even when they are equipped with the keenest of senses and powerful means of offense, it seems incredible that a sloth can hold its own in this overcrowded tropical jungle.

From birth to death it climbs slowly about the great trees, leisurely feeding, languidly loving, and almost mechanically caring for its young. On the ground a host of enemies await it, but among the higher branches it fears chiefly occasional great *boas*, climbing jaguars and, worst of all, the mighty talons of harpy eagles. Its means of offense is a joke—a slow, ineffective reaching forward with open jaws, a lethargic stroke of arm and claws which anything but another sloth can avoid. Yet the race of sloths persists and thrives, and in past years I have had as many as eighteen under observation at one time.

A sloth makes no nest or shelter; it even disdains the protection of dense foliage. But for all its apparent helplessness it has a *cheval-de-frise*⁶ of protection which many animals far above it in intelligence might well envy. Its outer line of defense is invisibility—and there is none better, for until you have seen your intended prey you can neither attack nor devour him. No hedgehog or armadillo ever rolled a more perfect ball of itself than does a sloth, sitting in a lofty, sway-

⁶*cheval-de-frise*, a military term referring to a row of spikes projecting from the top of a wall or fence used for defense.

ing crotch with head and feet and legs all gathered close together inside. This posture, to an onlooker, destroys all thought of a living animal, but presents a very satisfactory white ants' nest or bunch of dead leaves. If we look at the hair of a sloth we shall see small, gray patches along the length of the hairs—at first sight bits of bark and débris of wood. But these minute, scattered particles are of the utmost aid to this invisibility. They are a peculiar species of alga or lichen-like growth, which is found only in this peculiar haunt, and when the rains begin and all the jungle turns a deep, glowing emerald, these tiny plants also react to the welcome moisture and become verdant—thus growing over the sloth a protecting, misty veil of green.

Even we dull-sensed humans require neither sight nor hearing to detect the presence of an animal like the skunk; in the absolute quiet and blackness of midnight we can tell when a porcupine has crossed our path, or when there are mice in the bureau drawers. But a dozen sloths may be hanging to the trees near at hand and never the slightest whiff of odor comes from them. A baby sloth has not even a baby smell, and all this is part of the cloak of invisibility. The voice, raised so very seldom, is so ventriloquial, and possesses such a strange, unanimal-like quality, that it can never be a guide to the location, much less to the identity of the author. Here we have three senses—sight, hearing, smell—all operating at a distance, two of them by vibrations, and all leagued together to shelter the sloth from attack.

But in spite of this dramatic guard of invisibility the keen eyes of an eagle, the lapping tongue of a giant boa, and the amazing delicacy of a jaguar's sense of smell break through at times. The jaguar scents sign under the tree of the sloth, climbs eagerly as far as he dares, and finds ready to his paw the ball of animal unconsciousness; a harpy eagle half a mile above the jungle sees a bunch of leaves reach out a sleepy arm and scratch itself—something clumps of leaves should not do.

Down spirals the great bird, slowly, majestically, knowing there is no need of haste, and alights close by the mammalian sphere. Still the sloth does not move, apparently waiting for what fate may bring—waiting with that patience and resignation which comes only to those of our fellow creatures who cannot say, “I am I!” It seems as if Nature had deserted her jungle changeling, stripped now of its protecting cloak.

The sloth, however, has never been given credit for its powers of passive resistance, and now, with its enemy within striking distance, its death or even injury is far from a certainty. The crotch which the sloth chooses for its favorite outdoor sport, sleep, is unusually high up or far out among the lesser branches, where the eight claws of the eagle or the eighteen of a jaguar find but precarious hold. In order to strike at the quiescent animal the bird has to relinquish half of its foothold, the cat nearly one-quarter. If the victim were a feathery bush turkey or a soft-bodied squirrel, one stroke would be sufficient, but this strange creature is something far different. In the first place, it is only to be plucked from its perch by the exertion of enormous strength. No man can seize a sloth by the long hair of the back and pull it off. So strong are its muscles, so vise-like the grip of its dozen talons, that either the crotch must be cut or broken off or the long claws unfastened one by one. Neither of these alternatives is possible to the attacking cat or eagle. They must depend upon crushing or penetrating power of stroke or grasp.

Here is where the sloth's second line of defense becomes operative. First, as I have mentioned, the swaying branch and dizzy height are in his favor, as well as his immovable grip. To begin with the innermost defenses, while his jungle fellows, the ring-tailed and red howling monkeys, have thirteen ribs, the sloth may have as many as twenty; in the latter animal they are, in addition, unusually broad and flat, slats rather than rods. Next comes the skin, which is so thick and tough

that many an Indian's arrow falls back without even scratching the hide. The skin of the unborn sloth is as tough and strong as that of a full-grown monkey. Finally we have the fur—two distinct coats, the under one fine, short, and matted, the outer long, harsh, and coarse. Is it any wonder that, teetering on a swaying branch, many a jaguar has had to give up, after frantic attempts to strike his claws through the felted hair, the tough skin, and the bony lattice-work which protect the vitals of this edentate bur! *dens tooth dentis reaching teeth sloth has not a front*

Having rescued our sloth from his most immediate peril, let us watch him solve some of the very few problems which life presents to him. Although the Cecropia tree, on the leaves of which he feeds, is scattered far and wide through the jungle, yet sloths are found almost exclusively along river banks, and, most amazingly, they not infrequently take to the water. I have caught a dozen sloths swimming rivers a mile or more in width. Judging from the speed of short distances, a sloth can swim a mile in three hours and twenty minutes. Their thick skin and fur must be a protection against crocodiles, electric eels, and perai fish as well as jaguars. Why they should ever wish to swim across these wide expanses of water is as inexplicable as the migration of butterflies. One side of the river has as many comfortable crotches, as many millions of Cecropia leaves, and as many eligible lady sloths as the other! In this unreasonable desire for anything which is out of reach, sloths come very close to a characteristic of human beings.

Even in the jungle, sloths are not always the static creatures which their vegetable-like life would lead us to believe, as I was able to prove many years ago. A young male was brought in by Indians, and after keeping it a few days I shaved off two patches of hair from the center of the back, and labeling it with a metal tag I turned it loose. Forty-eight days later it was captured near a small settlement of Bovianders⁷ several

⁷Bovianders, peasant settlers partly descended from Dutch colonial blood.

miles farther up and across the river. During this time it must have traversed four miles of jungle and one of river.

The principal difference between the male and female three-toed sloths is the presence on the back of the male of a large, oval spot of orange-colored fur. To any creature of more active mentality such a minor distinction must often be embarrassing. In an approaching sloth, walking upside down as usual, this mark is quite invisible, and hence every meeting of two sloths must contain much of delightful uncertainty, of ignorance whether the encounter presages courtship or merely gossip. But color or markings have no meaning in the dull eyes of these animals. Until they have sniffed and almost touched noses they show no recognition or reaction whatever.

I once invented a sloth island—a large circle of ground surrounded by a deep ditch, where sloths climbed about some saplings and ate, but principally slept, and lived for months at a time. This was within sight of my laboratory table; so I could watch what was taking place by merely raising my head. Some of the occurrences were almost too strange for creatures of this earth. I watched two courtships, each resulting in nothing more serious than my own amusement. A female was asleep in a low crotch, curled up into a perfect ball deep within which was ensconced a month-old baby. Two yards overhead was a male who had slept for nine hours without interruption. Moved by what, to a sloth, must have been a burst of uncontrollable emotion, he slowly unwound himself and clambered downward. When close to the sleeping beauty, he reached out a claw and tentatively touched a shoulder. Even more deliberately she excavated her head and long neck and peered in every direction but the right one. At last she perceived her suitor and looked away as if the sight was too much for her. Again he touched her post-like neck, and now there arose all the flaming fury of a mother at the flirtatious advances of this stranger. With incredible slowness and effort she freed an arm, deliberately drew it back, and

then began a slow forward stroke with arm and claws. Meanwhile her gentleman friend had changed his position; so the blow swept or, more correctly, passed, through empty air, the lack of impact almost throwing her out of the crotch. The disdained one left with slowness and dignity—or had he already forgotten why he had descended?—and returned to his perch and slumber, where, I am sure, not even such active things as dreams came to disturb his peace.

The second courtship advanced to the stage where the Gallant actually got his claws tangled in the lady's back hair before she awoke. When she grasped the situation, she left at once and clambered to the highest branch tip followed by the male. Then she turned and climbed down and across her annoyer, leaving him stranded on the lofty branch looking eagerly about and reaching out hopefully toward a big green iguana⁸ asleep on the next limb in mistake for his fair companion. For an hour he wandered languidly after her, then gave it up and went to sleep. Throughout these and other emotional crises no sound is ever uttered, no feature altered from its stolid repose. The head moves mechanically and the dull eyes blink slowly, as if striving to pierce the opaque veil which ever hangs between the brain of a sloth and the sights, sounds, and odors of this tropical world. If the orange back-spot was ever of any use in courtship, in arousing any emotion, aesthetic or otherwise, it must have been in ages long past when the ancestors of sloths, contemporaries of their gigantic relatives, the Mylodons,⁹ had better eyesight for escaping from saber-toothed tigers than there is need today.

The climax of a sloth's emotion has nothing to do with the opposite sex or with the young, but is exhibited when two females are confined in a cage together. The result is wholly unexpected. After sniffing at one another for a moment, they engage in a slowed-up moving-picture battle. Before

⁸*Iguana*, a kind of lizard.

⁹*Mylodon*, a large, sloth-like edentate, now extinct, of which fossils have been found.

any harm is done, one or the other gives utterance to the usual piercing whistle and surrenders. She lies flat on the cage floor and offers no defense while the second female proceeds to claw her, now and then attempting, usually vainly, to bite. It is so unpleasant that I have always separated them at this stage, but there is no doubt that in every case the unnatural affray would go on until the victim was killed. In fact I have heard of several instances where this actually took place.

A far pleasanter sight is the young sloth, one of the most adorable balls of fuzzy fur imaginable. While the sense of play is all but lacking, his trustfulness and helplessness are most infantile. Every person who takes him up is an accepted substitute for his mother, and he will clamber slowly about one's clothing for hours in supreme contentment. One thing I can never explain is that on the ground the baby is even more helpless than his parents. While they can hitch themselves along, body dragging, limbs outspread, until they reach the nearest tree, a young sloth is wholly without power to move. Placed on a flat bit of ground it rolls and tumbles about, occasionally greatly encouraged by seizing hold of its own foot or leg under the impression that at last it has encountered a branch.

Sloths sleep about twice as much as other mammals, and a baby sloth often gets tired of being confined in the heart of its mother's sleeping sphere, and creeping out under her arm will go on an exploring expedition around and around her. When over two weeks old it has strength to rise on its hind legs and sway back and forth like nothing else in the world. Its eyes are only a little keener than those of the parent, and it peers up at the foliage overhead with the most pitiful interest. It is slowly weaned from a milk diet to the leaves of the *Cecropia*, which the mother at first chews up for her offspring.

I once watched a young sloth about a month old and saw it leave its mother for the first time. As the old one moved

slowly back and forth, pulling down Cecropia leaves and feeding on them, the youngster took firm grip on a leaf stem, mumbling at it with no success whatever. When finally it stretched around and found no soft fur within reach it set up a wail which drew the attention of the mother at once. Still clinging to her perch, she reached out a forearm to an unbelievable distance and gently hooked the great claws about the huddled infant, which at once climbed down the long bridge and tumbled headlong into the hollow awaiting it.

When a very young sloth is gently disentangled from its mother and hooked on to a branch something of the greatest interest happens. Instead of walking forward, one foot after the other, and upside down as all adult sloths do, it reaches up and tries to get first one arm then the other *over* the support, and to pull itself into an upright position. This would seem to be a reversion to a time—perhaps millions of years ago—when the ancestors of sloths had not yet begun to hang inverted from the branches. After an interval of clumsy reaching and wriggling about, the baby by accident grasps its own body or limb, and, in this case, convinced that it is at last anchored safely again to its mother, it confidently lets go with all its other claws and tumbles ignominiously to the ground.

The moment a baby sloth dies and slips from its grip on the mother's fur, it ceases to exist for her. If it could call out she would reach down an arm and hook it toward her, but simply dropping silently means no more than if a disentangled bur had fallen from her coat. I have watched such a sloth carefully and have never seen any search of her own body or of the surrounding branches, or a moment's distraction from sleep or food. An imitation of the cry of the dead baby will attract her attention, but if not repeated she forgets it at once.

It is interesting to know of the lives of such beings as this—chronic pacifists, normal morons, the superlative of negative natures, yet holding their own amidst the struggle for existence. Nothing else desires to feed on such coarse fodder, no other

creature disputes with it the domain of the under side of branches, hence there is no competition. From our human point of view sloths are degenerate; from another angle they are among the most exquisitely adapted of living beings. If we humans, together with our brains, fitted as well into the possibilities of our own lives we should be infinitely finer and happier—and, besides, I should then be able to interpret more intelligently the life and the philosophy of sloths!

MAX BEERBOHM

Max Beerbohm is, perhaps more definitely than any other English writer now living, committed to the art of the essay. While with many the writing of essays comes secondary to the writing of stories or nature studies or travels or philosophy or journalism or criticism, with Mr. Beerbohm the essay, comprising all or none of these ingredients as you will, is its own excuse for being, as well as its writer's excuse for being, also.

Mr. Beerbohm was born in London in 1872, and educated at Charterhouse and at Merton College, Oxford. He had the congenial fortune to be an undergraduate in the days of Aubrey Beardsley and the *Yellow Book*, and it was in the pages of that famous periodical of the generally effete, effervescent, and ephemeral nineties that his first essay appeared in 1894. It is not fair, however, to place upon Mr. Beerbohm's works the stigma of futility which one sometimes associates with the nineties, even though his fastidious style is, measurably, a survival of that period.

For that fastidiousness is, in Mr. Beerbohm, no other than sincerest artistry. It is not dilettantism, even though he has said that it is. It is the deliberate craftsmanship of an expert and honest artist, matched to the prettiest wit in contemporary letters.

Nor is Mr. Beerbohm himself an anachronism lost in the twentieth century. To be sure he began with the nineties, but he began young, and he has been writing ever since. In 1898 he succeeded Bernard Shaw as dramatic critic of *The Saturday Review*, a post which he held for twelve years. His last book is as fresh as his first, for in Max Beerbohm the comic spirit is ageless. There is no extravagance in this judgment of an anonymous writer: "If a man were asked, given the wide range, if you will, of a movement, a force, a personality, a writer, to name the most completely distinguished fact in the England of our time, how happy would it be for his reputation with posterity if he had the wit to say Max Beerbohm."

With characteristic impertinence, Mr. Beerbohm named his first book, published shortly after his graduation, *Works of Max Beerbohm*

(1896). This was followed by *More* (1899), *Yet Again* (1909), *And Even Now* (1920). To these four collections of essays must be added a unique novel, *Zuleika Dobson; or, An Oxford Love Story* (1911), and *A Christmas Garland* (1912), a volume of inimitable parodies. In all these writings of an extended career are found an irrepressible youthfulness, an ever brilliant and apparently effortless technique.

In 1906 Mr. Beerbohm first visited Italy as a correspondent for the *Daily Mail*. Shortly thereafter he married, and has since lived in Italy.

Like Thackeray, he combines the writer with the cartoonist. But, in Mr. Beerbohm, they come to much the same thing. As his biographer, Bohun Lynch, has remarked, his half dozen volumes of caricatures show "the same wit, the same sense of what is ludicrous, the same intelligence behind the sense" as the essays.

Nothing in Mr. Beerbohm's writings is more delicately conceived than the essay here reprinted, "A Relic." In this reminiscence the author exquisitely retrieves the thrill of impressionable youth at the first challenge to re-create life in terms of art.

A RELIC*

MAX BEERBOHM

Yesterday I found in a cupboard an old, small, battered portmanteau which, by the initials on it, I recognized as my own property. The lock appeared to have been forced. I dimly remembered having forced it myself, with a poker, in my hot youth, after some journey in which I had lost the key; and this act of violence was probably the reason why the trunk had so long ago ceased to travel. I unstrapped it, not without dust; it exhaled the faint scent of its long closure; it contained a tweed suit of Late Victorian pattern, some bills, some letters, a collar-stud, and—something which, after I had wondered for a moment or two what on earth it was, caused me suddenly to murmur, “Down below, the sea rustled to and fro over the shingle.”

Strange that these words had, year after long year, been existing in some obscure cell at the back of my brain!—forgotten but all the while existing like the trunk in that cupboard. What released them, what threw open the cell door, was nothing but the fragment of a fan; just the butt-end of an inexpensive fan. The sticks are of white bone, clipped together with a semicircular ring that is not silver. They are neatly oval at the base, but variously jagged at the other end. The longest of them measures perhaps two inches. Ring and all, they have no market value; for a farthing is the least coin in our currency. And yet, though I had so long forgotten them, for me they are not worthless. They touch a chord. . . . Lest this confession raise false hopes in the reader, I add that I did not know their owner.

I did once see her, and in Normandy, and by moonlight,

*From *And Even Now*, by Max Beerbohm. Reprinted by permission from William Heinemann, Ltd.

and her name was Angélique. She was graceful, she was even beautiful. I was but nineteen years old. Yet even so, I cannot say that she impressed me favorably. I was seated at a table of a café on the terrace of a casino. I sat listening to the quiet sea, which I had crossed that morning. The hour was late; there were few people about. I heard the swing-door behind me flap open, and was aware of a sharp snapping and crackling sound as a lady in white passed quickly by me. I stared at her erect, thin back and her agitated elbows. A short, fat man passed in pursuit of her—an elderly man in a black alpaca jacket that billowed. I saw that she had left a trail of little white things on the asphalt. I watched the efforts of the agonized, short, fat man to overtake her as she swept wraith-like away to the distant end of the terrace. What was the matter? What had made her so spectacularly angry with him? The three or four waiters of the café were exchanging cynical smiles and shrugs, as waiters will. I tried to feel cynical, but was thrilled with excitement, with wonder and curiosity. The woman out yonder had doubled on her tracks. She had not slackened her furious speed, but the man waddlingly contrived to keep pace with her now. With every moment they became more distinct, and the prospect that they would presently pass by me, back into the casino, gave me that physical tension which one feels on a wayside platform at the imminent passing of an express. In the rushingly enlarged vision I had of them, the wrath on the woman's face was even more saliently the main thing than I had supposed it would be. That very hard Parisian face must have been as white as the powder that coated it. "*Écoute, Angélique,*" gasped the perspiring bourgeois, "*écoute, je te supplie—*"¹ The swing-door received them and was left swinging to and fro. I wanted to follow, but had not paid for my bock. I beckoned my waiter. On his way to me he stooped down and picked up something which, with a

¹"*Écoute, Angélique,*" . . . , "Listen, Angélique, listen, I beg of you——"

smile and a shrug, he laid on my table: "*Il semble que Mademoiselle ne s'en servira plus.*"² This is the thing I now write of, and at sight of it I understood why there had been that snapping and crackling, and what the white fragments on the ground were.

I hurried through the rooms, noping to see a continuation of that drama—a scene of appeasement, perhaps, or of fury still implacable. But the two oddly-assorted players were not performing there. My waiter had told me he had not seen either of them before. I suppose they had arrived that day. But I was not destined to see either of them again. They went away, I suppose, next morning; jointly or singly; singly, I imagine.

They made, however, a prolonged stay in my young memory, and would have done so even had I not had that tangible memento of them. Who were they, those two of whom that one strange glimpse had befallen me? What, I wondered, was the previous history of each? What, in particular, had all that tragic pother been about? Mlle. Angélique I guessed to be thirty years old, her friend perhaps fifty-five. Each of their faces was as clear to me as in the moment of actual vision—the man's fat, shiny, bewildered face; the taut, white face of the woman, the hard, red line of her mouth, the eyes that were not flashing, but positively dull, with rage. I presumed that the fan had been a present from him, and a recent present—bought perhaps that very day, after their arrival in the town. But what, *what* had he done that she should break it between her hands, scattering the splinters as who should sow dragon's teeth? I could not believe he had done anything much amiss. I imagined her grievance a trivial one. But this did not make the case less engrossing. Again and again I would take the fan-stump from my pocket, examining it on the palm of my hand, or between finger and thumb, hoping to read the mystery it had been mixed up in, so that I might

²"*Il semble . . .*" "It seems that Mademoiselle has no further use for it."

reveal that mystery to the world. To the world, yes; nothing less than that. I was determined to make a story of what I had seen—a *conte*³ in the manner of Guy de Maupassant. Now and again, in the course of the past year or so, it had occurred to me that I might be a writer. But I had not felt the impulse to sit down and write something. I did feel that impulse now. It would indeed have been an irresistible impulse if I had known just what to write.

I felt I might know at any moment, and had but to give my mind to it. Maupassant was an impeccable artist, but I think the secret of the hold he had on the young men of my day was not so much that we discerned his cunning as that we delighted in the simplicity which his cunning achieved. I had read a great number of his short stories, but none that had made me feel as though I, if I were a writer, mightn't have written it myself. Maupassant had a European reputation. It was pleasing, it was soothing and gratifying, to feel that one could at any time win an equal fame if one chose to set pen to paper. And now, suddenly, the spring had been touched in me, the time was come. I was grateful for the fluke by which I had witnessed on the terrace that evocative scene. I looked forward to reading the MS of "The Fan"—tomorrow, at latest. I was not wildly ambitious. I was not inordinately vain. I knew I couldn't ever, with the best will in the world, write like Mr. George Meredith. Those wondrous works of his, seething with wit, with poetry and philosophy and what not, never beguiled me with the sense that I might do something similar. I had full consciousness of not being a philosopher, of not being a poet, and of not being a wit. Well, Maupassant was none of these things. He was just an observer, like me. Of course he was a good deal older than I, and had observed a good deal more. But it seemed to me that he was not my superior in knowledge of life. I knew all about life through *him*.

³*conte*, a short story, particularly one of a humorous or startling character

Dimly, the initial paragraph of my tale floated in my mind. I—not exactly I myself, but rather that impersonal *je* familiar to me through Maupassant—was to be sitting at that table, with a bock before me, just as I *had* sat. Four or five short sentences would give the whole scene. One of these I had quite definitely composed. You have already heard it. “Down below, the sea rustled to and fro over the shingle.”

These words, which pleased me much, were to do double duty. They were to recur. They were to be, by a fine stroke, the very last words of my tale, their tranquillity striking a sharp, ironic contrast with the stress of what had just been narrated. I had, you see, advanced further in the form of my tale than in the substance. But even the form was as yet vague. What, exactly, was to happen after Mlle. Angélique and M. Joumand (as I provisionally called him) had rushed back past me into the casino? It was clear that I must hear the whole inner history from the lips of one or the other of them. Which? Should M. Joumand stagger out on to the terrace, sit down heavily at the table next to mine, bury his head in his hands, and presently, in broken words, blurt out to me all that might be of interest? . . . “‘And I tell you I gave up everything for her—everything.’ He stared at me with his old hopeless eyes. ‘She is more than the fiend I have described to you. Yet I swear to you, monsieur, that if I had anything left to give, it should be hers.’

“Down below, the sea rustled to and fro over the shingle.”

Or should the lady herself be my informant? For a while, I rather leaned to this alternative. It was more exciting, it seemed to make the writer more signally a man of the world. On the other hand, it was less simple to manage. Wronged persons might be ever so communicative, but I surmised that persons in the wrong were reticent. Mlle. Angélique, therefore, would have to be modified by me in appearance and behavior, toned down, touched up; and poor M. Joumand must look like a man of whom one could believe anything. . . . “She

ceased speaking. She gazed down at the fragments of her fan, and then, as though finding in them an image of her own life, whispered, 'To think what I once was, monsieur!—what, but for him, I might be, even now!' She buried her face in her hands, then stared out into the night. Suddenly she uttered a short, harsh laugh.

"Down below, the sea rustled to and fro over the shingle."

I decided that I must choose the first of these two ways. It was the less chivalrous as well as the less lurid way, but clearly it was the more artistic as well as the easier. The "*chose vue*," the "*tranche de la vie*"⁴—this was the thing to aim at. Honesty was the best policy. I must be nothing if not merciless. Maupassant was nothing if not merciless. He would not have spared Mlle. Angélique. Besides, why should I libel M. Joumand? Poor—no, not *poor* M. Joumand! I warned myself against pitying him. One touch of "sentimentality," and I should be lost. M. Joumand was ridiculous. I must keep him so. But—what was his position in life? Was he a lawyer perhaps?—or the proprietor of a shop in the Rue de Rivoli? I toyed with the possibility that he kept a fan shop—that the business had once been a prosperous one, but had gone down, down, because of his infatuation for this woman to whom he was always giving fans—which she *always* smashed. . . . "Ah, monsieur, cruel and ungrateful to me though she is, I swear to you that if I had anything left to give, it should be hers; but," he stared at me with his old hopeless eyes, 'the fan she broke tonight was the last—the last, monsieur—of my stock.'

"Down below,"—but I pulled myself together, and asked pardon of my Muse.

It may be that I had offended her by my fooling. Or it may be that she had a sisterly desire to shield Mlle. Angélique from my mordant art. Or it may be that she was bent on saving M. de Maupassant from a dangerous rivalry. Anyway,

⁴*chose vue*, the thing seen; *tranche de la vie*, slice of life.

she withheld from me the inspiration I had so confidently solicited. I *could not* think what had led up to that scene on the terrace. I tried hard and soberly. I turned the "*chose vue*" over and over in my mind, day by day, and the fan-stump over and over in my hand. But the "*chose à figurer*"⁵—what, oh, what, was that? Nightly I revisited the café, and sat there with an open mind—a mind wide open to catch the idea that should drop into it like a ripe golden plum. The plum did not ripen. The mind remained wide open for a week or more, but nothing except that phrase about the sea rustled to and fro in it.

A full quarter of a century has gone by. M. Joumand's death, so far too fat was he all those years ago, may be presumed. A temper so violent as Mlle. Angélique's must surely have brought its owner to the grave, long since. But here, all unchanged, the stump of her fan is; and once more I turn it over and over in my hand, not learning its secret—no, nor even trying to, now. The chord this relic strikes in me is not one of curiosity as to that old quarrel, but (if you will forgive me) one of tenderness for my first effort to write, and for my first hopes of excellence.

⁵*chose à figurer*, the thing to be imagined.

HILAIRE BELLOC

(Joseph) Hilaire (Pierre) Belloc, all-round man of letters but pre-eminently essayist, was born in 1870 at La Celle-St.-Cloud, a suburb of Paris. He was gifted with a brilliant heritage, for his mother was a granddaughter of Joseph Priestley, scientist and Unitarian divine, and moved in the highest intellectual circles of her time; his father was a French barrister; a grandfather was an artist of some note and curator of the Luxembourg Museum; a grandmother was a French woman of letters.

At an early age, after his father's death, he was taken to Slindon, in Sussex, and his boyhood was lived among "the great hills of the South Country," about which he has written his best poem. At twelve, being a Roman Catholic by birth, he was sent to the Oratory School, Edgbaston, where he came weekly under the influence of Cardinal Newman. Thereafter he volunteered to perform his service in the French Army, and, during a year in the Field Artillery, picked up an astonishing knowledge of military science and a fluent command of barrack-room French.

Returning to England, he entered Oxford and won a Balliol Scholarship and prompt recognition as the most brilliant student of his time. The exuberance which marks his later writings was very apparent in his undergraduate life—an insatiable zest for living as well as for learning. The influence of the great Jowett whetted his appetite for history.

His first books, volumes of light verse, appeared in quick succession after his graduation from Oxford in 1895. He did not keep long to this form of writing, which he does less happily than prose, but turned his hand to essays, books of travel, novels, and historical studies. His special province is that of exposition, which, in his biographical essays, he does superlatively. He has also a genius for topography, acquired partly from his military interest, partly from his love of walking, riding, and sailing, and shown in such books of travel as *The Path to Rome* (1902), *Esto Perpetua* (1906), *The Hills and the*

Sea (1906), *The Pyrenees* (1909). In his essays, too, the reader is abundantly aware of Mr. Belloc's sensitiveness to the feeling or flavor of a place, and his quick response to historic associations.

The essays are a most heterogeneous lot, many of them tossed off in the routine of journalism, some of them of but slight worth, most of them lacking in finish, yet many of them richly rewarding. They will be found in *The Old Road* (1904), *On Nothing* (1908), *On Everything* (1909), *On Anything* (1910), *First and Last* (1911), *On Something* (1911), and *On* (1923), to mention only the chief collections. One will find a judicious selection from this prodigality in *A Picked Company* (1915).

In 1903 Mr. Belloc became a British subject. From 1906 to 1910 he was a Liberal Member of Parliament, but left politics in disgust. In 1896 he married a Californian.

During the World War he wrote weekly articles for *Land and Water*, in which he discussed the strategy of the conflict with rare insight and expertness. The fact that four of his great-uncles fought as generals under Napoleon helps to account for an enthusiasm which made him the foremost military authority in British journalism.

"On an Unknown Country" presents but one side of a many-sided personality. In this dream-essay he suggests something of the mystic experience which is not uncommon in the Roman Catholic. Yet it is not more typical of Mr. Belloc than the historical and biographical studies in which the love of exact facts rises above the poetic and the romantic.

ON AN UNKNOWN COUNTRY*

HILAIRE BELLOC

Ten years ago, I think, or perhaps a little less or perhaps a little more, I came in the Euston Road¹—that thoroughfare of Empire—upon a young man a little younger than myself whom I knew, though I did not know him very well. It was drizzling, and the second-hand booksellers (who are rare in this thoroughfare) were beginning to put out the waterproof covers over their wares. This disturbed my acquaintance, because he was engaged upon buying a cheap book that should really satisfy him.

Now this was difficult, for he had no hobby, and the book which should satisfy him must be one that should describe or summon up, or, it is better to say, hint at—or, the theologians would say, reveal, or, the Platonists would say, *recall*—the Unknown Country, which he thought was his very home.

I had known his habit of seeking such books for two years, and had half wondered at it and half sympathized. It was an appetite partly satisfied by almost any work that brought to him the vision of a place in the mind which he had always intensely desired, but to which, as he had then long guessed, and as he is now quite certain, no human paths directly lead. He would buy with avidity travels to the moon and to the planets, from the most worthless to the best. He loved Utopias and did not disregard even so prosaic a category as books of real travel, so long as by exaggeration or by a glamour in the style they gave him a full draft of that drug which he desired. Whether this satisfaction the young man sought was a satisfaction in illusion (I have used the word "drug"

*From *On Nothing and Kindred Subjects*. Methuen and Company, 1908. Reprinted by permission of the author and the publishers.

¹Euston Road, a street in London.

with hesitation), or whether it was, as he persistently maintained, the satisfaction of a memory, or whether it was, as I am often tempted to think, the satisfaction of a thirst which will ultimately be quenched in every human soul I cannot tell. Whatever it was, he sought it with more than the appetite with which a hungry man seeks food. He sought it with something that was not hunger but passion.

That evening he found a book.

It is well known that men purchase with difficulty second-hand books upon the stalls, and that in some mysterious way the sellers of these books are content to provide a kind of library for the poorer and more eager of the public, and a library admirable in this, that it is accessible upon every shelf and exposes a man to no control, except that he must not steal, and even in this it is nothing but the force of public law that interferes. My friend therefore would in the natural course of things have dipped into the book and left it there; but a better luck persuaded him. Whether it was the beginning of the rain or a sudden loneliness in such terrible weather and in such a terrible town, compelling him to seek a more permanent companionship with another mind, or whether it was my sudden arrival and shame lest his poverty should appear in his refusing to buy the book—whatever it was, he bought that same. And since he bought the Book I also have known it and have found in it, as he did, the most complete expression that I know of the Unknown Country, of which he was a citizen—oddly a citizen, as I then thought, wisely as I now conceive.

All that can best be expressed in words should be expressed in verse, but verse is a slow thing to create; nay, it is not really created: it is a secretion of the mind, it is a pearl that gathers round some irritant and slowly expresses the very essence of beauty and of desire that has lain long, potential and unexpressed, in the mind of the man who secretes it. God knows that this Unknown Country has been hit off in

verse a hundred times. If I were perfectly sure of my accents I would quote two lines from the *Odyssey* in which the Unknown Country stands out as clear as does a sudden vision from a mountain ridge when the mist lifts after a long climb and one sees beneath one an unexpected and glorious land; such a vision as greets a man when he comes over the Saldeu into the simple and secluded Republic of the Andorrans. Then, again, the Germans in their idioms have flashed it out, I am assured, for I remember a woman telling me that there was a song by Schiller which exactly gave the revelation of which I speak. In English, thank Heaven, emotion of this kind, emotion necessary to the life of the soul, is very abundantly furnished. As, who does not know the lines:

Blessed with that which is not in the word
Of man nor his conception: Blessed Land!

Then there is also the whole group of glimpses which Shakespeare amused himself by scattering as might a man who had a great oak chest full of jewels and who now and then, out of kindly fun, poured out a handful and gave them to his guests. I quote from memory, but I think certain of the lines run more or less like this:

Look how the dawn in russet mantle clad,
Stands on the steep of yon high eastern hill.

And again:

Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops.

Which moves me to digress. . . . How on earth did any living man pull it off as well as that? I remember arguing with a man who very genuinely thought the talent of Shakespeare was exaggerated in public opinion, and discovering at the end of a long wrangle that he was not considering Shakespeare as a poet. But as a poet, then, how on earth did he manage it?

Keats did it continually in the *Hyperion*. Milton does it so well in the Fourth Book of *Paradise Lost* that I defy any man of a sane understanding to read the whole of that book before going to bed and not to wake up next morning as though he had been on a journey. William Morris does it, especially in the verses about a prayer over the corn²; and as for Vergil, the poet Vergil, he does it continually like a man whose very trade it is. Who does not remember the swimmer³ who saw Italy from the top of the wave?

Here also let me digress. How do the poets do it? (I do not mean where do they get their power, as I was asking just now of Shakespeare, but how do the words, simple or complex, produce that effect?) Very often there is not any adjective, sometimes not any qualification at all; often only one subject with its predicate and its statement and its object. There is never any detail of description, but the scene rises, more vivid in color, more exact in outline, more wonderful in influence, than anything we can see with our eyes, except perhaps those things we see in the few moments of intense emotion which come to us, we know not whence, and expand out into completion and into manhood.

Catullus does it. He does it so powerfully in the opening lines of

Vesper adest . . .

that a man reads the first couplet of that Hymeneal,⁴ and immediately perceives the Apennines.

²a prayer over the corn, "Summer Dawn."

³the swimmer,

Tres Notus hibernas immensa per aequora noctes
Vexit me violentus aqua: vix lumine quarto
Prospexi Italiam, summa sublimis ab unda.

(Aeneid VI, 355-357)

"Over the boundless sea, three dark stormy nights through the water
Borne by a strong south wind, I drove; the fourth day was dawning
When from the crest of a wave, high tossing, I faintly discovered Italy!"
—trans. by H. H. Ballard.

⁴the first couplet of that Hymeneal,

Vesper adest, juvenes, consurgite. Vesper Olympo
expectata diu vix tandem lumina tollit. (Catullus LXII)

"The evening is come; rise up, ye youths. Vesper from Olympus at last is just raising his long-looked-for light."

The nameless translator of the Highland song⁵ does it, especially when he advances that battering line—

And we in dreams behold the Hebrides.

They all do it, bless their hearts, the poets, which leads me back again to the mournful reflection that it cannot be done in prose . . .

Little friends, my readers, I wish it could be done in prose, for if it could, and if I knew how to do it, I would here present to you that Unknown Country in such a fashion that every landscape which you should see henceforth would be transformed, by the appearing through it, the shining and uplifting through it, of the Unknown Country upon which reposes this tedious and repetitive world.

Now you may say to me that prose can do it, and you may quote to me the end of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, a very remarkable piece of writing. Or, better still, as we shall be more agreed upon it, the general impression left upon the mind by the book which set me writing—Mr. Hudson's *Crystal Age*.⁶ I do not deny that prose can do it, but when it does it, it is hardly to be called prose, for it is inspired. Note carefully the passages in which the trick is worked in prose (for instance, in the story of Ruth in the Bible, where it is done with complete success), you still perceive an incantation and a spell. Indeed this same episode of Ruth in exile has inspired two splendid passages of European verse, of which it is difficult to say which is the more national, and therefore the greater, Victor Hugo's in the *Légende des Siècles*⁷ or Keats's astounding three lines.⁸

⁵*The Highland song,*

From the lone shealing on the misty island

Mountains divide us, and the waste of seas—

But still the blood is strong, the heart is Highland,

And we in dreams behold the Hebrides.

From the "Canadian Boat Song," *Blackwood's Magazine*, September, 1829. (A shealing is a fisherman's hut.)

⁶*Mr. Hudson's Crystal Age.* See page 212.

⁷In the "*Légende des Siècles*," "Boöz Endormi."

⁸*Keats's astounding three lines:*

Perhaps the self-same song that found a path

Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,

She stood in tears amid the alien corn.

—Ode to a Nightingale.

There was a shepherd the other day up at Findon Fair who had come from the east by Lewes⁹ with sheep, and who had in his eyes that reminiscence of horizons which makes the eyes of shepherds and of mountaineers different from the eyes of other men. He was occupied, when I came upon him, in pulling Mr. Fulton's sheep by one hind leg so that they should go the way they were desired to go. It happened that day that Mr. Fulton's sheep were not sold, and the shepherd went driving them back through Findon Village, and up on to the high Downs. I went with him to hear what he had to say, for shepherds talk quite differently from other men. And when we came on to the shoulder of Chanctonbury and looked down upon the Weald, which stretched out like the Plains of Heaven, he said to me: "I never come here but it seems like a different place down below, and as though it were not the place where I have gone afoot with sheep under the hills. It seems different when you are looking down at it." He added that he had never known why. Then I knew that he, like myself, was perpetually in perception of the Unknown Country, and I was very pleased. But we did not say anything more to each other about it until we got down into Steyning. Then we drank together and we still said nothing more about it; so that to this day all we know of the matter is what we knew when we started, and what you are now no further informed upon, namely, that there is an Unknown Country lying beneath the places that we know, and appearing only in moments of revelation.

Whether we shall reach this country at last or whether we shall not, it is impossible to determine.

⁹*Lewes*, a town in Sussex. The other place names in this paragraph also refer to places in Sussex.

RANDOLPH BOURNE

Randolph (Silliman) Bourne, a member of the brilliant young group that launched *The New Republic*, was born in Bloomfield, N. J., in 1886. Although he was a cripple, he managed to crowd his life both with thought and with action, thus fulfilling his desire "not for things but for high experience." Until the age of twenty-three he wandered from one job to another: he was a private secretary, a musical proof-reader in a pianola-record factory, an accompanist. In 1909 he entered Columbia and came under the stimulating influence of John Dewey. Four years later he was sent to Europe on a Gilder Traveling Scholarship.

In the meantime he had been writing. *Youth and Life* (1913) was published while he was an undergraduate. In this book he forecast many of the ideals of the Youth Movement which was to be born in Europe after the World War as a protest against the orthodoxies of age.

When the War broke, he opposed it with utterly independent opinion, and died in 1918 an acknowledged pacifist. He felt that the War was futile and that men should look beyond the exigency of the moment to the larger good, beyond a confining nationalism to the largest individual freedom. He would have repudiated the charge of lack of patriotism, for he was powerfully moved by the possibilities of an America set free from European tradition and culture.

After his death appeared *Untimely Papers* (1919) and *The Evolution of a Literary Radical* (1920), but many of his fugitive pieces must be sought in the magazines of the period.

WHAT IS OPINION?*

RANDOLPH BOURNE

A journal of opinion has always to face the attack of the practical man that it is a mere vehicle for dilettantism, which wastes in expressing sentiments the energy which should go to the presentation of sober fact and sound data. There is far too much opinion at large in the world already, he thinks. What he wants is not more opinion, but a guide out of the fog-bank into some clear light.

Such a practical man flatters too highly most of that comment which passes for opinion in the journals of the day. Most current reactions to the War have been, for example, not opinion at all, but mere batteries of guns in an emotional warfare. In all the discussion little emerges that is not articulate emotion or articulate group-interest. This variedly articulate anger, disgust, prejudice, moral reaction has little more right to be termed opinion than the start one gives when one meets a bear. It is instinctive response clothed with words.

Our molders of opinion—our preachers and politicians and editors and publicists—are not speaking in order so much to convince us as to make us act or vote or feel with them. Their words are chains of phrases strung together almost undesignedly with a view to pulling us to the cause or party or idea they are supporting. It is a curious delusion that words express thought. Phrases like *democracy*, *liberty*, *militarism*, *the principles of justice and humanity*, are not primarily meanings at all. They are epithets hurled at us to arouse some desired resentment, or they are spotlights guaranteed to create certain warm, emotional glows of assent in the mind which receives them. It

*From *The New Republic*, September 18, 1915. Reprinted by permission of *The New Republic*.

is the reaction they touch off that makes them significant, not their meaning. Words are such deadly things not because they mean something, but because they get wrapped up with our emotion and pull it out with them when they are seized. In support of the articulate emotion, there may be any number of highly rational arguments. But it is not the arguments which have come first. It is the antagonism or the glow of approval, while the evidence has grown almost vegetatively around the emotion. The world is always willing to be fooled in this way. It is always willing to take the ideas at their face value, instead of going straight to the emotional core and discovering the animus that directed the collection of the ideas. The constant danger to the mind that would be intellectual, that would "have opinions," is that it is willing to identify itself or indolently let itself be identified with groups that are not expressing opinion at all, but only articulating their emotion.

Genuine opinion is neither cold, logical judgment nor irrational feeling. It is scientific hypothesis, to be tested and revised as experience widens. Opinion is a view of a situation based on grounds short of proof. In a valid opinion they must be *just* short of proof. Good opinion is not spasmodic. The mind must have made a very wide sweep, made the complete circuit of the compass. It must first have hunted down the predisposing prejudice and neutralized it, and then bent itself to discovering all the factors that converge upon the situation. A good opinion places the event or person or idea it is judging firmly in a scheme of things. You get its position in a spreading field as well as in a historical chain.

But good opinion is not flabby and uncertain. It is not a "much to be said on both sides." It is a provisional conviction to be held as a conviction until new light alters it. It is an interpretation with a definite slant and bias. But it presses hotly for proof. It strains constantly toward the accuracy of truth. Good opinion, although firm, is the direct opposite of dogma. Dogma is hard and unyielding, a sort of petrified

emotion. It is constantly masquerading as proof, as genuine opinion never does. You do not revise dogmas. You smash them. But opinion is flexible and gracious. It does not object to examining itself, to publishing the source of its interpretations. It takes you freely behind the scenes. It is not afraid to show you the foundations of the categories and terms in which it is expressed. It will let the bony framework of its presuppositions stand out rather boldly at times. It invites criticism. It has the scientist's disinterestedness in its own conviction. What it wants is to understand, to get the thing it is judging rightly placed, to grasp its true meaning in the world.

Opinion, however, aims not at a mere static comprehension. It does not merely survey the field with serene Olympian gaze. It is a force, and the only force that can be relied upon in the long run to fortify the will and clear the vision. Conviction, gripped after the widest possible survey of the field, is what we must act upon if we are to effect those social changes which most of us desire. The world has generally preferred to act from logical consistency or from the high elation of feeling rather than upon daring and clear-sighted experiment. The idea of a social and political opinion which, free from moral prejudice, strains toward scientific proof, as the hypotheses of the physicist strain toward physical laws, is still very new, but it is already playing havoc with the old crusted folkways.

If such opinion is to be this force of the future, there cannot be too much of its guiding thread. Yet it constantly becomes not easier but harder to form valid opinions. We are stunned by the volume of what there is to know in the human world. We are overwhelmed by the mass of sociological data, and brought to despair even more by the great gaps which must be filled. We have every day set before us infinitely more than we can possibly digest. We run the constant risk of missing completely the relevant and the important. Opinion never had a better chance of being based on substrata of quite meaningless facts. The result is often an excessive caution among

those whose business it is to know. The universities remain esoteric through the refusal of those who have the wide survey to commit themselves. Those who have the "grounds just short of proof" will not form opinions. Those who will loosely express their opinions have not the grounds. This treason of the intellectual class has neutralized the expected effects of public education. Discussion and universal reading have not really made popular opinion any more intelligent or reliable. They have merely made great masses emotionally articulate, rendered prejudice more vociferous and varied. The need for interpreters, for resolute expressers of opinion, becomes therefore more urgent. Even if real opinion is a Utopian ideal, and no mind can ever make the wide survey and go through the stringent processes necessary to form it, the brave effort must always be made. Its best will not be valueless. To work at breaking up the cake of intellectual custom, at setting the new terms and values that current society needs, at judging events in the light of the larger conceptions of science and the most fruitful social tendencies, will be not to remain entirely futile in the modern world. Quixotic as the enterprise may seem, it is the formation of opinion and not dusty scholarship and solemn cant that will enlist the good will and best endeavors of those who aim to think worthily.

RUPERT BROOKE

Rupert Brooke, gifted with the highest promise of all the young British poets who lost their lives in the World War, is not ordinarily thought of as an essayist. "The Rockies," which is, indeed, more a letter than an essay, is selected from his only prose volume, *Letters from America* (1916). It is reprinted here as somewhat apart from the ordinary Britisher's "impressions" of America—as the definition of subtle differences between the Old World and the New apprehensible only by a sensitive and poetic mind.

Brooke was born in 1887 at Rugby, where his father was a teacher. He was educated at Rugby and at Cambridge, and proved himself not only a fine classical scholar but a notable athlete, especially a swimmer. His friends were many: W. W. Gibson, Lascelles Abercrombie, Edward Thomas, Walter de la Mare, Henry James (who wrote a preface to *Letters from America*). In appearance he was a second Byron, but he had not inherited the satanic graces of his predecessor. He was loved and admired as a healthy, clean-minded, high-spirited youth, with every expectation of a brilliant literary career.

After he left Cambridge he traveled and studied in Germany, and visited America and Hawaii. In 1913 he was elected a Fellow of King's College. In 1914 he was swept into the War, serving in Belgium first, and sailing with the British Mediterranean Expeditionary Force on the disastrous Gallipoli campaign. He was taken ill with blood poisoning while on the voyage and died at Skyros, in the Aegean Sea, in 1915, aged only twenty-seven.

The *Collected Poems of Rupert Brooke* appeared later in the same year.

THE ROCKIES*

RUPERT BROOKE

At Calgary, if you can spare a minute from more important matters, slip beyond the hurrying white city, climb the golf links, and gaze west. A low bank of dark clouds disturbs you by the fixity of its outline. It is the Rockies, seventy miles away. On a good day, it is said, they are visible twice as far, so clear and serene is this air. Five hundred miles west is the coast of British Columbia, a region with a different climate, different country, and different problems. It is cut off from the prairies by vast tracts of wild country and uninhabitable ranges. For nearly two hundred miles the train pants through the homeless grandeur of the Rockies and the Selkirks. Four or five hotels, a few huts or tents, and a rare mining-camp—that is all the habitation in many thousands of square miles. Little even of that is visible from the train. That is one of the chief differences between the effect of the Rockies and that of the Alps. There, you are always in sight of a civilization which has nestled for ages at the feet of those high places. They stand, enrobed with worship, and grander by contrast with the lives of men. These unmemoried heights are inhuman—or rather, irrelevant to humanity. No recorded Hannibal has struggled across them; their shadow lies on no remembered literature. They acknowledge claims neither of the soul nor of the body of man. He is a stranger, neither Nature's enemy nor her child. She is there alone, scarcely a unity in the heaped confusion of these crags, almost without grandeur among the chaos of earth.

Yet this horrid and solitary wildness is but one aspect.

*From *Letters from America*. Copyright, 1916, by Charles Scribner's Sons. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

There is beauty here, at length, for the first time in Canada, the real beauty that is always too sudden for mortal eyes, and brings pain with its comfort. The Rockies have a remoter, yet a kindlier, beauty than the Alps. Their rock is of a browner color, and such rugged peaks and crowns as do not attain snow continually suggest gigantic castellations, or the ramparts of Titans. Eastward, the foothills are few and low, and the mountains stand superbly. The heart lifts to see them. They guard the sunset. Into this rocky wilderness you plunge, and toil through it hour by hour, viewing it from the rear of the observation car. The observation car is a great invention of the new world. At the end of the train is a compartment with large windows, and a little platform behind it, roofed over, but exposed otherwise to the air. On this platform are sixteen little perches, for which you fight with Americans. Victorious, you crouch on one, and watch the ever-receding panorama behind the train. It is an admirable way of viewing scenery. But a day of being perpetually drawn backward at a great pace through some of the grandest mountains in the world has a queer effect. Like life, it leaves you with a dizzy irritation. For, as in life, you never see the glories till they are past, and then they vanish with incredible rapidity. And if you crane to see the dwindling further peaks, you miss the new splendors.

The day I went through most of the Rockies was, by some standards, a bad one for the view. Rain scudded by in forlorn, gray showers, and the upper parts of the mountains were wrapped in cloud, which was but rarely blown aside to reveal the heights. Sublimity, therefore, was left to the imagination; but desolation was most vividly present. In no weather could the impression of loneliness be stronger. The pines drooped and sobbed. Cascades, born somewhere in the dun firmament above, dropped down the mountainsides in ever-growing, white threads. The rivers roared and plunged with aimless passion down the ravines. Stray little clouds, left behind when the

wrack lifted a little, ran bleating up and down the forlorn hillsides. More often, the clouds trailed along the valleys, a long procession of shrouded, melancholy figures, seeming to pause, as with an indeterminate, tragic, vain gesture, before passing out of sight up some ravine.

Yet desolation is not the final impression that will remain of the Rockies and the Selkirks. I was advised by various people to "stop off" at Banff and at Lake Louise, in the Rockies. I did so. They are supposed to be equally the beauty spots of the mountains. How perplexing it is that advisers are always so kindly and willing to help, and always so indiscriminating. It is equally disastrous to be a sceptic and to be credulous. Banff is an ordinary little tourist resort in mountainous country, with hills and a stream and snow peaks beyond. Beautiful enough, and invigorating. But Lake Louise—Lake Louise is of another world. Imagine a little round lake 6000 feet up, a mile across, closed in by great cliffs of brown rock, round the shoulders of which are thrown mantles of close, dark pine. At one end the lake is fed by a vast glacier, and its milky, tumbling stream; and the glacier climbs to snow fields of one of the highest and loveliest peaks in the Rockies, which keeps perpetual guard over the scene. To this place you go up three or four miles from the railway. There is the hotel at one end of the lake, facing the glacier; else no sign of humanity. From the windows you may watch the water and the peaks all day, and never see the same view twice. In the lake, ever-changing, is Beauty herself, as nearly visible to mortal eyes as she may ever be. The water, beyond the flowers, is green, always a different green. Sometimes it is tranquil, glassy, shot with blue, of a peacock tint. Then a little wind awakes in the distance, and ruffles the surface, yard by yard, covering it with a myriad tiny wrinkles, till half the lake is milky emerald, while the rest still sleeps. And, at length, the whole is astir, and the sun catches it, and Lake Louise is a web of laughter, the opal distillation of all the buds of all the spring. On either

side go up the dark, processional pines, mounting to the sacred peaks, devout, kneeling, motionless, in an ecstasy of homely adoration, like the donors and their families in a Flemish picture. Among these you may wander for hours by little rambling paths, over white and red and golden flowers, and, continually, you spy little lakes, hidden away, each a shy, soft jewel of a new strange tint of green or blue, mutable and lovely . . . And beyond all is the glacier and the vast fields and peaks of eternal snow.

If you watch the great white cliff, from the foot of which the glacier flows—seven miles away, but it seems two—you will sometimes see a little puff of silvery smoke go up, thin, and vanish. A few seconds later comes the roar of terrific, distant thunder. The mountains tower and smile unregarding in the sun. It was an avalanche. And if you climb any of the ridges or peaks around, there are discovered other valleys and heights and ranges, wild and desert, stretching endlessly away. As day draws to an end the shadows on the snow turn bluer, the crying of innumerable waters hushes, and the immense, bare ramparts of westward-facing rock that guard the great valley win a rich, golden-brown radiance. Long after the sun has set they seem to give forth the splendor of the day, and the tranquillity of their centuries, in undiminished fullness. They have that other-worldly serenity which a perfect old age possesses. And as with a perfect old age, so here, the color and the light ebb so gradually out of things that you could swear nothing of the radiance and glory gone up to the very moment before the dark.

It was on such a height, and at some such hour as this, that I sat and considered the nature of the country in this continent. There was perceptible, even here, though less urgent than elsewhere, the strangeness I had noticed in woods by the St. Lawrence, and on the banks of the Delaware (where are red-haired girls who sing at dawn), and in British Columbia, and afterwards among the brown hills and colossal trees of Cali-

fornia, but especially by that lonely, golden beach in Manitoba, where the high-stepping little brown deer run down to drink, and the wild geese through the evening go flying and crying. It is an empty land. To love the country here—mountains are worshiped, not loved—is like embracing a wraith. A European can find nothing to satisfy the hunger of his heart. The air is too thin to breathe. He requires haunted woods, and the friendly presence of ghosts. The immaterial soil of England is heavy and fertile with the decaying stuff of past seasons and generations. Here is the floor of a new wood, yet uncumbered by one year's autumn fall. We Europeans find the Orient stale and yet too luxuriantly fetid by reason of the multitude of bygone lives and thoughts, oppressive with the crowded presence of the dead, both men and gods. So, I imagine, a Canadian would feel our woods and fields heavy with the past and the invisible, and suffer claustrophobia¹ in an English countryside beneath the dreadful pressure of immortals. For his own forests and wild places are wind-swept and empty. That is their charm, and their terror. You may lie awake all night and never feel the passing of evil presences, nor hear printless feet; neither do you lapse into slumber with the comfortable consciousness of those friendly watchers who sit invisibly by a lonely sleeper under an English sky. Even an Irishman would not see a row of little men with green caps lepping along beneath the fireweed and the golden daisies; nor have the subtler fairies of England found these wilds. It has never paid a steamship or railway company to arrange for their emigration.

In the bush of certain islands of the South Seas you may hear a crashing on windless noons, and, looking up, see a corpse swinging along head downward at a great speed from tree to tree, holding by its toes, grimacing, dripping with decay. Americans, so active in this life, rest quiet afterwards. And though every stone of Wall Street have its separate Lar², their

¹*claustrophobia*, morbid dread of confined places.

²*Lar*, a tutelary divinity, spirit of a dead ancestor.

kind have not gone out beyond city lots. The maple and the birch conceal no dryads, and Pan has never been heard amongst these reed beds. Look as long as you like upon a cataract of the New World, you shall not see a white arm in the foam. A godless place. And the dead do not return. That is why there is nothing lurking in the heart of the shadows, and no human mystery in the colors, and neither the same joy nor the kind of peace in dawn and sunset that older lands know. It is, indeed, a new world. How far away seem those grassy, moonlit places in England that have been Roman camps or roads, where there is always serenity, and the spirit of a purpose at rest, and the sunlight flashes upon more than flint! Here one is perpetually a first-comer. The land is virginal, the wind cleaner than elsewhere, and every lake new-born, and each day is the first day. The flowers are less conscious than English flowers, the breezes have nothing to remember, and everything to promise. There walk, as yet, no ghosts of lovers in Canadian lanes. This is the essence of the gray freshness and brisk melancholy of this land. And for all the charm of those qualities, it is also the secret of a European's discontent. For it is possible, at a pinch, to do without gods. But one misses the dead.

DOROTHY CANFIELD

Dorothy (Frances) Canfield (Mrs. John R. Fisher) appears appropriately enough among a group of essayists, for, although she is ordinarily called a novelist, she has turned her pen to a wide variety of writing. Most important are, of course, her novels: *The Squirrel-Cage* (1912), *The Bent Twig* (1915), *The Brimming Cup* (1921), *Rough Hewn* (1922), *Her Son's Wife* (1926), are best known. But she has also produced several volumes of short stories, treatises on the Montessori system of education, a translation of Papini's *Life of Christ*, a study of Corneille and Racine, and many magazine articles.

She was born at Lawrence, Kansas, 1879, her father having been at various times a college professor and president of several state universities. Hence her girlhood was spent in various university towns of the Middle West; she later lived and studied in France and Italy, a fact which accounts for her linguistic ability; she was graduated from Ohio State University and took her Ph. D. at Columbia. She was at one time secretary of the Horace Mann School, New York. During the World War she directed relief work in France from 1916 to 1919.

But through all her activities and wanderings, the fact of her New England descent, patent in everything that she has written, was in the background of her life. Her family had come to America in 1636 from England, had moved to Vermont in 1764, and had owned land there ever since. After her marriage in 1907 she took up her residence on a family farm at Arlington, Vermont. Her home is the center of all that goes on in the neighboring countryside. She has especially interested herself in the improvement of rural schools, and is the only woman member of the State Board of Education of Vermont.

It was, then, almost inevitable that the editors of *The Nation*, in casting about for someone to describe Vermont in their series of articles entitled *These United States*, should have chosen Dorothy Canfield. "Vermont, Our Rich Little Poor State" was the result.

VERMONT OUR RICH LITTLE POOR STATE*

DOROTHY CANFIELD

Everybody knows that New York State is a glowing, queenly creature, with a gold crown on her head and a flowing purple velvet cloak. The face of Louisiana is as familiar—dark-eyed, fascinating, temperamental. Virginia is a white-haired, dignified *grande dame* with ancient, well-mended fine lace and thin old silver spoons. Massachusetts is a man, a serious, middle-aged man, with a hard, conscientious, intelligent face, and hair thinned by intellectual application. And if I am not mistaken, Pennsylvania is a man, too, a well-dressed business man, with plenty of money in his pockets and the consciousness of his prosperity written large on his smooth, indoor face and in his kindly, calculating eyes.

These State countenances are familiar to all of us, and many more; but back of this throng of affluent, thriving personalities, quite conscious of their own importance in the world, stands one, known to fewer Americans, lean, rather gaunt compared to the well-fed curves of the others, anything but fine, aristocratic, or picturesque. Yet the little group of mountaineers who know the physiognomy of Vermont from having grown up with it have the most crabbed, obstinate affection and respect for their State, which they see as a tall, powerful man, with thick gray hair, rough outdoor clothes, a sinewy axman's hand and arm, a humorous, candid, shrewd mouth, and a weather-beaten face from which look out the most quietly fearless eyes ever set in any man's head. They know there is little money in the pockets of that woodman's coat, but there

*From *These United States*. Boni & Liveright, 1923. Reprinted by permission of the author and the publishers.

is strength in the long, corded arm, an unhurried sense of fun lies behind the ironic glint in the eyes, and the life animating all the quaint, strong, unspoiled personality is tintured to its last fiber by an unenvious satisfaction with plain ways which is quite literally worth a million dollars to any possessor. Not to envy other people is an inheritance rich enough; but Vermont adds to that treasure the greater one of not being afraid. It seems incredible, in our modern world, so tormented with fears about its safety, that a whole Stateful of people have no ground for apprehension; but it is true. The Vermonter is so used to the moral freedom of not dreading anything that he is hardly conscious of it. It is the breath he draws, this lack of fear; it is the marrow of his bones. Why should he be afraid of anybody or anything?

What are some of the things that other people fear? Well, most of them are afraid of being poor. This fear, rather more than love, is what makes the modern world go round. The Vermonter is not afraid of being poor because he is poor already and has been for a hundred and fifty years, and it hasn't hurt him a bit. To trade for money this lack of fear of poverty would seem to him the most idiotic of bargains, and if there is one thing on which he prides himself it is on not making poor bargains. This quality makes him by no means a favorite with people who try to organize the world along what they call "strictly business lines of industrial efficiency." Most of their operations are based on their certainty that people are afraid to be poor. We Vermonters often notice a considerable heat of exasperation in such devotees of industrialism when they encounter the natives of our State. We make no comment on this at the time, taking them in with the silent attentive observation which they furiously dub "bucolic stolidity"; but after they have gone back to the city we laugh to ourselves, and some old fellow among us hits on just the droll, ironic phrase to describe the encounter. For years afterwards, we quote this to the mystification of the outsider.

Another well-known and much-described fear is that of not keeping up with the social procession, of being obliged to step down a rung on the social ladder. This is another fear which stops short before it gets into Vermont. That small section of the country has never kept up with other people's processions and has found it no hardship to walk along at its own gait. And as for social ladders, any glimpse of a social ladder or of purely social distinctions moves a Vermonter to the unaffected, pitying, perhaps rather coarsely hearty mirth which white people feel at the sight of the complicated taboo of savage tribes. Of course, the Vermonter pays for his high-handed scoffing at sacred social distinctions by a rough plainness, not to say abruptness, of speech and manner which people from outside do not relish and which they describe in far from complimentary terms. This is a pity. But I dare say you can't have something for nothing morally, any more than materially, and perhaps it is not too high a price to pay for the total absence in our world of any sort of servility or overbearing arrogance or any sort of pretentiousness. Every man to his taste. We like it better the way we have it.

Another fear, perhaps the most corroding one in our world of possessors of material wealth, is the panic alarm at any glimpse of possible changes in the social fabric which may make things uncomfortable for possessors. The Latin poet who many years ago described the light-hearted stride of a poor man across a dark plain infested with robbers described the care-free gait at which Vermont moves through the uncertain and troubled modern world. Vermont, like some of the remote valleys in the Pyrenees, has always been too far out of the furiously swirling current of modern industrial life to be much affected by it or to dread its vagaries. For generations now, when times get hard and manufactures are flat and deflated and the mills in the industrial States around us are shut down, and the newspapers are talking about bankruptcies and bread-lines, the Vermont family, exactly as rich and exactly as poor as it

ever was, remarks with a kindliness tinged with pride: "Well, we'd better ask Lem's folks up to stay a spell, till times get better. I guess it's pretty hard sledding for them." And when times get better and Lem's family leave the poor little frame farmhouse which has been their refuge, and drive off down the steep stony road which is the first stage of their journey back to wages and movies, the Vermont family stand looking after them, still with friendliness.

They realize shrewdly that already they seem countrified to their mill-town, factory-hand guests, but this does not worry them; rather it makes an ironic quirk come into the corner of their mouths, as at the transparent absurdity of a child. They continue to stand and wave their hands with undiminished kindliness, this time tinged by an amused humor which would be distinctly unpalatable to the others if they could understand it. I am afraid there is an element of sinful pride in the granite-like comfort they take in the security given them by their plain tastes and ability to deal with life at first hand. No dependence on employers for them!

Another problem of which we read occasionally as bothering serious-minded folks in other parts is what to do with accumulated wealth. It bothers us as little as how to fight cobras. For the most part, society in Vermont is organized along the most obviously solid and natural lines, primitive and elemental. Everybody is working. Yes, working, you jeering step-lively outsiders, although Vermonters may not hit up the hectic pace of factory hands and although some leisure for talking things over and reading the papers and cracking jokes about life, and going hunting and nutting is a necessity for Vermonters even if they are obliged to pay for it by the foregoing of sacred dollars. Almost everybody is working, and at the plainest, most visible, most understandable jobs, to raise food, or grind corn, or make shoes, or put houses together, or repair Fords, or teach children. It is very rare when anybody in Vermont fails to secure a fair amount of shelter and clothing and food and education; and

it is equally rare when anybody secures very much more than that. There are, so to speak, no accumulated possessions at all.

But perhaps what Vermont is least afraid of, and what other people fear and hate most, is politics. You know as well as I do that most Americans are low in their minds about politics. They feel that politics is really beyond them, that they never will be able to get what they want through their political action. The "fatalism of the multitude" weighs like lead upon their hearts. When there are so many, what can one man do? Well, you see in Vermont there aren't so many. There isn't any multitude. Self-government may not be perfection there, any more than anywhere else, but it bears the closest, realest relationship to the citizens, and is not at all given over to professional politicians who are always below the level of the best voters. Vermonters see nothing in self-government (especially local self-government) inherently more complicated than keeping your bankbook balanced. Perhaps this is because Vermont puts up as little as possible with that lazy substitute for self-government known as the "representative system," under which you tell somebody else to do the governing for you and not to bother you about it lest your money-making be disturbed. There is so little money to make in Vermont that few people are absorbed in making it. Nearly everybody has sufficient strength and time left over, and more than sufficient interest, to give to self-government. The Town Meeting is self-government, direct, articulate, personal. It is the annual assemblage not of the representatives of the governed, but of every one of the governed themselves. Anybody—you who are governed by a non-existing entity called "the county" cannot understand this, but it is true—anybody at all who does not like the way things are going in his town can stand up and say so, and propose a cure, as pungently as his command of his native tongue will allow. And Czar Public Opinion not only lets him do this, but rather admires a man who has something to say for his own point of view.

Every question concerning the welfare of the town, to the last forgotten valley in the mountains, is brought up at this open meeting and decided after loud and open discussion. When it is over and the teams and Fords and lean, wiry men stream away from the Town Hall over the rutted roads in the sharp March air, they are all tingling with that wonderfully stimulating experience, having spoken their minds out freely on what concerns them. They step heavily in their great shoes through the mud, which on March-Meeting Day is awful beyond belief, but they hold up their heads. They have settled their own affairs. The physical atmosphere of town meeting is rather strong with tobacco and sawdust and close air, but the moral atmosphere is like that on a mountain-peak compared to any political life I ever saw elsewhere, either in France or in other American States. There is none of that stultifying, bored, cynical, disillusioned conviction that the rogues will beat the honest men again this time, as always. Not on your life! The honest men are on the job, with remarkably big and knotty fists, their dander ready to rise if somebody tries to put something over on them. And although they might not be able to cope with specially adroit political rogues, there is blessedly so little money involved in most Vermont operations that it is hardly worth the while of specially adroit rogues to frequent town meetings. The Vermonter has for a century and a half found self-government not so very daunting, and often the highest form of entertainment.

This tradition of looking the world in the eye and asking no odds of it, probably seems to the rest of you a rather curious tradition for a small, poor, rustic State with hardly a millionaire to its name, no political pull of any sort, and nothing to distinguish it in the eyes of the outside world. But all Vermonters know where it comes from, straight down from our forefathers who did look the world in the eye and made the world back down. With nothing on their side but their fearlessness and a sense of human rights as against property rights,

they held out stoutly and successfully against oppression and injustice, though dressed up in all the fine names of "legality" and "loyalty to the organization of society."

Not many people outside Vermont know the dramatic story of the State's early life, but everybody inside the State does. There are fewer people in the whole of Vermont than in the city of Buffalo, which is not at all huge as cities go now. But even at that, there are a good many men, women, and children in the State, over three hundred thousand. There is hardly one of this number who does not know about the history of the New Hampshire Grants, and how our great-grandfathers stood up against all the then existing British state for their naked human rights; and won the fight.

I know you are vague on this point, though you probably had it as a lesson one day in high school; so I will give you a sketch of it, compressed to a brevity which ought not to bore you too much. After the end of the French and Indian War, Vermont was safe ground for American settlers, and the bolder spirits began to come in from New Hampshire and Connecticut. They settled, went through the terribly wearing toil of pioneers, felled trees, reclaimed land, drained swamps, built houses and mills, braved isolation, poverty, danger, health-breaking labor, and made Vermont a region of homes. They had learned to love it as we love it now, silently, undramatically, steadfastly, detesting any florid, high-flown talk about it, burying our love in our hearts and pretending to outsiders that it is not there. Vermonters are not sentimental, articulate Celts, but hermetically-sealed Yankees. But they live on this love for their homes, and they have shown themselves quite ready to die for it.

Back there in the eighteenth century, just when the settlers had definitely proved that they could make homes out of the wilderness, they were informed that by a legal technicality the grants by which they held their land were not valid; and that the King of England authorized New York lawyers to send officers of the law to take the Vermont land away from the

men who had reclaimed it. It was then to be given to soft-handed, well-to-do men, with political influence, who had no more rightful connection with that land than did the inhabitants of Peking. The Vermont settlers did not pretend to understand the law of that day. They only knew in their hearts that the land they had so painfully reclaimed, worked over, brought up their children on, was theirs, if anything ever belonged to anybody. A shout went up from Vermont to the New York officers of the law: "Just come and take it away, if you dare!" And they got down their long rifles, ran some bullets, and dried their powder.

The hated "York State men" tried to do this, ventured into the Vermont settlements, were roughly treated, and sent home. They were afraid to try it again and retreated to the Albany courts of law, which summoned the Vermonters to submit the matter to trial. With nothing but their inherent human rights back of them, the Vermonters went down to Albany (no true Vermonter can abide the name of Albany since then!) and there went through the solemn twaddle of a law-trial, where the standards were not those of human rightness and fair-dealing, but were drawn from yellow parchments. Of course the parchments won. That is their habit in law-courts.

Ethan Allen¹ was in Albany through this trial, to help the Vermonters. After the decision was rendered, he walked out of the law-court, on his way home, surrounded by a mocking crowd of York State men. The whole history is so familiar to us Vermonters that any one of us would know just what is coming next in this episode. When, in speaking to a Vermont audience, you begin this story, you can see people lay down their umbrellas and handbags to have their hands free to applaud, and you can see every backbone straighten as you go on in the phrases consecrated by time. "They shouted jeeringly at Allen: 'Now, do you know you're beaten? Now will you lie down and give up?' Ethan Allen drew himself to the

¹*Ethan Allen* (1737-1789), leader of the "Green Mountain Boys" in the Revolutionary War.

full height of his magnificent manhood" (we never use any less fine a phrase than this) "and cried out in a ringing voice, 'The gods of the mountain are not the gods of the plains,' and strode away leaving them silenced." (Here is where the speaker always has to wait for people to get through clapping.) He strode back to Vermont and organized a resistance. Was there ever a more absurd, pitiable, pretentious attempt? A handful of rough, ignorant mountaineers, without a legal leg to stand on, to try to defend themselves against the British law! And their only pretext, the preposterous one that they had earned what they held!

Well, to make a long and complicated story short, the rough handful of ignorant men did continue to hold the land they had earned, and we, their descendants, are living on it now. They did more. For fourteen years after that, those men, our great-grandfathers, ruled Vermont, free of any sovereignty, an independent republic on the continent of North America. You never heard that quaint and colorful fact about our little State, did you? Yes, for fourteen years they stood straight and strong on their own feet, owing allegiance to nothing in creation but their own consciences. They stood steady in a whirling, shifting world, and proved to their own satisfaction that to stand steady is not an impossible task.

Down to this day, down to the last corner of our green, wooded, mountain-bedecked State, we all stand steadier because of that memory back of us. Every foot of the land on which we live was held for us by the courage, almost absurd in its simple-heartedness, of our tall, lean, ironic grandfathers, and by their candid faith in the inherent strength of a just cause. They risked their fortunes and their lives on their faith in this principle: that those who work and create have certain sacred rights, no matter what laws may be, more than those who do nothing. With that principle as our main inheritance, we Vermonters can cock our feet up on the railing of the porch and with a tranquil heart read the news of the modern world and the frightened guessing of other folks at what is coming next!

STUART CHASE

Stuart Chase was born in New Hampshire, in 1888. He acquired his education at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University, receiving the S. B. degree of the latter in 1910. For some years he worked with his father as a certified public accountant but, if his "Portrait of a Radical"¹ is largely autobiography, found himself lured from business by a succession of unorthodox enthusiasms—single tax, Fabianism, socialism, democratic control of industry, and so on. In the midst of these excursions, he married and, with his bride, embarked on a first-hand experience in the life of the industrial masses, described in *A Honeymoon Experiment* (1916).

Then he spent several years as an investigator for the Federal Trade Commission studying the meat industry. All the time his conviction was strengthening that none of the liberal causes to which he had devoted himself could make headway because none of them seemed to know where it was going. He decided that the weakness of such movements was that they knew nothing of the "springs of human conduct . . . of the forces which underlie social conduct and behavior, had never considered . . . a scientific technique for advancing their ideas, and were unaware of the biological and psychological factors involved in the programs which they ardently and fruitlessly advocated."

The remedy for muddle-headed reform is, he concluded, the acquirement of definite technical knowledge. In particular, he believes, we must know the facts about the prevailing economic régime. The studies which, in association with the Labor Bureau, Inc., he has made since 1922 lead him to assail modern business for its enormous wastefulness. This fact of economic waste, as he shows in *The Tragedy of Waste* (1925) and again in the essay reprinted here, accounts for many imperfections in contemporary civilization. Readers skeptical of Mr. Chase's statements should remember that he has the trained accountant's passion for the exact fact as "an occurrence in space and time which, if seen by one competent observer, is capable of being verified by another."

Your Money's Worth (1927), written with F. J. Schlink, became a best seller in spite of dealing with economic problems.

¹*The Century Magazine*, July, 1924.

THE DOGMA OF "BUSINESS FIRST"*

STUART CHASE

One hundred twenty-six years ago my great-great-grandfather was living in a farmhouse with a pitch to its back roof and a great fireplace, ovened and wainscoted, in the town of Newburyport, Massachusetts. He lived in a community that raised the bulk of its own food, built its own houses out of local materials, and spun and wove most of its own clothing. Withal, it was good food, durable and comely clothing, and housing of a unique and lasting beauty. On High Street were the square white houses of the shipbuilders, and out along the country roads were the farmhouses with their well-sweeps and their dipping eaves. And lovely as were the houses of the shipbuilders, lovelier still were the ships (soon it was to be clipper ships) which they built. In fact, upon an astonishing amount of the materials which passed through the hands of the men and women of Newburyport, and the other New England towns—upon ironwork, pewter, glass, woodwork, textiles, masonry—was stamped an authentic and enduring beauty which all the banalities of the traffic in antiques cannot efface. Reasonably well fed, snugly housed, and with articles to his hand for daily use which now are jealously guarded in museums, my great-great-grandfather lived his life. Anon he hitched up and went over the hills to the town meeting. The steam engine was yet to come, the first textile mill was yet to be built in New England, the industrial revolution was waiting to be born.

A century and a quarter later, after the most stupendous increase in the technical arts which the world has ever seen or is ever likely to see, I look about the place where I live in New

*From *Harpers Magazine*, September, 1926. Reprinted by permission of the author and the publishers.

York City, and out of the window of that place where the sun never rests, and wonder what, in terms of the life more abundant, the industrial revolution has done for me. How much more rewarding, not only in respect to beauty and the things of the spirit, but in absolute material comfort, is my existence than that of my great-great-grandfather? My housing is drearier and more inconvenient, my food is softer and less succulent, my clothing is uglier and infinitely less durable; the day-by-day pressure of the sights and shadows and odors about me is depressing, and cumulative in its depression.

In the matter of income, my great-great-grandfather was not above the average of his community; quite possibly, as a farmer, he was below it. The joint income of my wife and myself is probably three times the average of the community in which we live. Compare the average householder in New York today with the average citizen in Newburyport in 1800, and where does the advantage, in terms of the good life, lie? Look abroad out of these sullen cañons to other cities—Chicago, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, St. Louis, San Francisco, New Orleans—to the suburban cubicles which girdle modern cities, to Main Street, to the farms of the cotton belt and of the tobacco belt, aye, to Newburyport and its outlying farms as they are today. What tangible improvements in well-being, beauty, and happiness has a century of unprecedented invention brought to the inhabitants of these places? I ask the question. I know that it has brought some well-being, perhaps a great deal to some people. But, looking into dead walls from my apartment window, I wonder again what are the gifts which Arkwright and Stephenson and Watt¹ have placed in my hands. The amazing thing is that I should wonder at all. There is a machine now which can make plows thirty-two times faster than the blacksmith of Newburyport could ever fashion them, a machine which can make cotton sheeting one hundred and three times faster than my great-

¹Richard Arkwright, George Stephenson, and James Watt invented, respectively, the spinning machine, the locomotive, and the steam engine.

great-grandmother could ever spin and weave it, and we have, in the energy released by the engines and turbines of America, the labor of three billions of slaves, or nearly thirty servants for every man, woman, and child in the country. Engineers have assured us that technical knowledge is now available which—if it could be put to work—would banish poverty, double or treble the standard of living, turn ugly cities into noble cities, and by means of giant power and decentralization bring the culture of the town to the countryside.

Why has this not been done? Why do I look out at my blank wall, why are millions infinitely worse-housed in slums, why does the tobacco grower of Kentucky abandon the losing struggle against the marching weeds? This is a question not lightly to be answered, a complex and baffling question. But my guess is this. It has not been done because an economy like that of Newburyport, for all its lack of engines, was well within the range of human capacity to administer, being in fact the immemorial economy of self-sustaining groups the world round; but the economy of the machine with its immense distances of transport and its great clots of workers who make no food, and of food growers who make nothing else, has proved to date, except in time of war, to be beyond human administrative capacity. Or better, under the prevailing system of business enterprise, it is held that the machine needs no master with an eye single to the welfare of the group; and whatever potential administrative capacity there may be accordingly never gets a chance to function. The prime charge upon every politician is the welfare of business in terms of monetary profit; only in passing and incidentally may he regard the welfare of the whole community. For it is held as axiomatic that what is good for business is good for everybody; what hurts business, hurts everybody. When Adam Smith² spoke of the "invisible hand" which directed this consummation, he little realized that he was founding what has come to be almost a new religion.

²Adam Smith (1723-1790), Scottish economist, author of *The Wealth of Nations*.

Thus God and Nature formed the general frame
And bade self-love and social be the same.

The learned Smith and the business men and the politicians may, of course, be right. Perhaps by scrupulously safeguarding self-interest and anarchy in business we do secure more in net welfare than we should by any other method. All other methods are, to date, largely a matter of theory because, since the coming of the machine, business anarchy is the only method which has been tried. The Russian experiment is too young to give any sound evidence on either side. But what we may conclude without fear of contradiction is that if business anarchy is the best way to regulate the machine, while it may keep a few more of us alive per acre of crop land, most of us have not gained anything compared with Newburyport, if, indeed, we have not lost. If this is indeed the best way, it is painful to contemplate the results of any other way. Where would a hundred years of coöperation or state socialism or some combination of these two with *laissez faire* have landed us? With two-thirds of the families of America now beneath the line of the United States Department of Labor's budget of health and decency, presumably most of us would have long since starved to death had the three billions of power slaves been in any other hands than those of business. Not many of us die of starvation, and perhaps, Mr. Coolidge, that is proof enough that yours is the wisest way.

Whatever its ultimate wisdom, anarchy is by definition and by practice wasteful. Nor should business anarchy reflect any exception to this rule. It may not prove unprofitable to take inventory of certain major leakages and losses which are implicit in the going economic structure. Down what blind alleys has technical knowledge gone; what dams have choked and diverted the free flow of invention and discovery; what are the three billions of slaves concerned with that they have not time to destroy these slums, uproot these weeds, build me a decent house in a noble city?

Voluntary Anarchy

II

The factor which is primarily responsible for the dispersion of energy is, I suppose, the lack of community and regional planning. That the rush of the pioneers to conquer a continent must inevitably be planless is as manifest as is the fact that absence of plan makes for an incredible volume of waste. Cities sprang up on the wrong sites, crops were grown on the wrong soil, factories were built in the wrong places, railways paralleled and choked waterways, forests were butchered to the glory of fire and flood, long hauls displaced short hauls, gas wells blew their billions of cubic feet into the air, pools of unemployed workers began to form, while the machine diluted its output with a tremendous tonnage of ugly, flimsy, shoddy, jerry-built, and generally adulterated products. "Everything turned to profit. The towns had their profitable dirt, their profitable smoke, their profitable slums, their profitable disorder, their profitable ignorance, their profitable despair. The curse of Midas was on this society; on its corporate life, on its common mind, on the decisive and impatient step it had taken from the peasant to the industrial age. For the new town was not a home where man could find beauty, happiness, leisure, learning, religion, the influences that civilize outlook and habit, but a bare and desolate place, without color, air, or laughter, where man, woman, and child worked, ate, and slept. This was to be the lot of the mass of mankind; this the sullen rhythm of their lives. The new factories and the new furnaces were like the Pyramids, telling of man's enslavement rather than of his power, casting their long shadows over the society that took such pride in them." Thus the Hammonds conclude their exhaustive study³ of the coming of the industrial revolution to England. It was not greatly different in New England or generally in urban America.

Of all the great American cities, only Washington was planned for comfortable living rather than for selling real estate by the

³their study, *The Rise of Modern Industry*, by J. L. Hammond and Barbara Hammond.

front foot. No local region has ever been planned at all and, save for a brief interval during the World War, no budget of national requirements has ever been cast, or the productive capacity to meet these requirements assessed. It is only the sheer fecundity of the machine which has permitted such a sprawling, haphazard growth. If every engine stripped its gears tomorrow, in a few days most of us, in our present geographical location, would begin to starve. In a month we should be dead. Without steam and electricity Newburyport could take no such chances in hurling its people to the economic peripheries, could afford no man power wasted on the shoddy and the jerry-built, could tolerate no excess industrial structure—twice the fields or twice the blacksmith shops or twice the shipways which normal demand called for—nor maintain the luxury of a reserve squadron of unemployed workers. Its economy forced a moderately accurate adaptation of production to requirements, and the dependability of the plan is evidenced in the time which still remained, after stark necessities were met, to elaborate and beautify, and stamp upon the output the seal of craftsmanship.

To plan for a continent is a harder task than to plan for a town. During the pioneering decades it was folly to ask for any plan at all. But as the Pacific was reached, some rough appraisal, some conscious attempts at coördination were certainly not beyond human capacity. Regions have been planned from Mesopotamia down. More American cities might have followed Washington—and Paris. Waterways might have been aided instead of strangled. The people through their Government might have controlled the exploitation of natural resources. As invention and the technical arts expanded, the coördination of national economic life might have become the more competent and accurate. Dreams, yes. But only so was it possible to outdistance Newburyport, only so could the fecundity of the machine create an accelerating reserve of welfare for the whole community. But the religion of private enterprise said no.

Take New York City, for example. The congestion of its streets puts a premium on death and injury, and adds enormously in transportation cost to every article the city dweller buys, and to every structure built. I know a building where four hundred bricklayers stand in rows, trowel in hand. Yet so great is the pressure of traffic below them, that never more than a single hour's supply of bricks can be stored in advance—which means a constant stream of trucks delivering hand to mouth. And when the trucks are halted in a traffic jam—as they often are—the masons stand idle. But that idle time goes into the cost of the building. As land values shift, it has become a recognized practice in New York to look on construction as a short-term investment. Thus, instead of lasting their hundred years or so, buildings erected twenty, even ten years ago—perfectly sound buildings many of them—are being torn down and scrapped. New buildings spring up, only to be scrapped, undepreciated, in their turn. Consider the colossal cost, the gigantic waste of such a program. Consider the cost of digging a subway, which, when it is finished, far from relieving congestion, has only accelerated it. Consider the cost of furnishing water, gas, sewerage, electricity, telephone service, foodstuffs, to a city so badly planned; think of the unbelievable number of bottlenecks through which all these services must pass. Think of the plumbing which has to be renewed on the average every eight years, at a labor cost twice that of the original installation. Yet the technical arts can tell us how to install plumbing which will last a generation. Consider the absurd terminal facilities, the half-loaded milk wagons, the hauls and the cross-hauls, the additional cleaning due to the lack of smoke prevention. Above all, consider the enormous parasitic population of New York: the middlemen, the speculators, the ticket scalpers, the prostitutes, the bootleggers, the dope peddlers, the flunkies, door openers, wash-room dusters; the purveyors of the ultra, the modish, and the snobbish.

In Newburyport there were no parasites, there were no prob-

lems of congestion, of subway building, of cross-hauling, of short-term housing investments, of idle bricklayers standing four hundred in a line. There were no seasons of unemployment when half the clothing workers walked the streets. There were no business cycles. There was no importing of bulk food-stuffs over half the world. There were no spirited campaigns, supported by expert psychologists, for the smashing of sales resistance. There was no installment buying. These merry things cost unbelievable sums of money—and what is more to the point than money, they cost *man power*. What the machine, what the industrial revolution have done in effect is to permit New York City to support a large population of idle, an enormous population of working parasites, and a colossal extra force of useful workers kept busy by the congestion and planlessness of the urban area. No little of the energy of the three billion slaves goes down this trapdoor. The technical knowledge is available to plan cities, to plan regions. Mr. J. Russell Smith⁴ alone, one suspects, could tell us how to double living standards. But there is no private profit to be made from such plans. They are proscribed.

III

I am convinced that it is the lack of regional planning which constitutes the main reasons for my failure to gain on my great-great-grandfather in anything like the ratio that productivity per capita gains. Most of the productivity goes into bridging the fissures in the underlying chaos. But this is a large, general, and, no doubt, an arguable indictment. It is possible to outline certain other leakages of knowledge more specifically.

Consider for instance the concern of the sciences of physics, chemistry, and biology with modern warfare. As everybody knows and as corporation income-tax returns make quantitatively evident, war is good for business. War has always driven some men mad, but never, until modern science took

⁴*J. Russell Smith*, professor of economic geography at Columbia University; author of several books in his field.

charge, has there been such a malady as "shell shock." Science as applied to warfare is well on its way to shrivel up the nervous systems of those it does not kill. Gone in battle are the virtues of strength, determination, skill at arms—aye, of courage. A little man with a leaky heart-valve pushes a button somewhere miles away, and the strength and skill and courage go hundreds of feet into the air, together with fragments of arms and legs and viscera. Of the ten million killed and the twenty million wounded in the late crusade for democracy, how many received their hurt in hand-to-hand struggle such as the Romans knew? Probably not one per cent. The ninety and nine were stricken by the engines of science.

Furthermore, with the development of psychology, the importance of civilian morale in war time is being given its due weight—which means that applied science must not only be directed to the destruction of armies and navies, but to the destruction of the civilian morale that supports them. Which means the wiping out of cities, the utter terrorizing of general populations, behind the lines. Competent technicians are at this moment giving their undivided attention to the most efficient means of destroying London, Paris, and Berlin. Yet when it was recently proposed in Washington that army engineers should design and army privates should build a bridge across the Potomac, thus salvaging a little of their technical education for the community, the construction industry rallied to a man, and in convention assembled, resolved that the project was an abomination; that construction undertaken for any other end than private profit threatened the whole fabric of the republic. So the army engineers were happily permitted to go back to their plans for blowing the bottom out of the Suez Canal.

Consider next the extent to which the technical arts have been overborne by quacks bent on the profitable exploitation of new knowledge. On the skirts of every advance in physics, chemistry, biology, and medicine hangs a well-organized group of astute men of business ready to capitalize with useless and

often dangerous drugs and devices the wide publicity which the new discovery has received: vaccines, radiations, glands, salvarsan, vitamins, and even the electron. Let J. B. S. Haldane, the noted English biologist, state the case: "For every dollar which we can spend on research and publicity together, the food-faking firms have a thousand for advertising 'scientific' foods. . . . The faker is already on the market with radiations to cure rheumatism and make your hair grow. These are mostly harmless, but probably the sale of X-ray tubes which may cause cancer will some day be as carefully regulated as that of strychnine. . . . There is no serious reason to believe that any of the rather expensive products of the sex glands now on the market, and often prescribed by doctors, are of any value except as faith cures."

Consider the mauling which science receives at the hands of the high priests of the Nordic saga. In primitive society men who rose to the chieftainship of the tribe looked suspiciously at aspirants from the ranks. So they frequently invited in the royal medicine men to help them hold their power. Today men of property, of so-called Anglo-Saxon stock, and thus possessing prestige and power, find their possession threatened by radical labor movements, by an incoming hoard of shrewd foreigners. They appeal, as always, to the medicine men. But a little difficulty presents itself. The emergence of science has relegated to a twilight zone the gods and myths invoked by the old-time medicine men. Science is on the throne. Softly; what does the commonalty know about science? Only enough not to blow out the gas, and to read scientific supplements in the Sunday newspapers. Good. Science, for the mass of men, is only a new mysticism; a shift from elves in glades to elves in molecules and air waves and germ-plasms. And with a zeal which would have distinguished them in the days of the Aztecs, the modern medicine men proceed to "prove by the aid of science" that the Nordics are the anointed race, that present class distinctions are eternal and unchangeable by virtue of the

chemistry of the germ-plasm, that heredity is everything and environment nothing. In brief, they summon science to support each and every prejudice of the American man of property. Meanwhile, on some of their pronouncements science has come to no conclusion at all, while on the balance the drift of impartial evidence points to diametrically opposite conclusions. More and more, for instance, particularly since the behaviorists began laboratory experiments on new-born babies, it appears that environment as reflected in acquired habits is the shaping influence on character. But gullible millions swill down this witchcraft, and thus is the new knowledge traduced again.

Consider the predicament in which applied psychology has landed. Psychology is not yet a full-fledged science, but it has made important and far-reaching advances in the past few years. The behaviorists, the psychoanalysts, and the industrial psychologists are laying the basis for profound changes in the technique of group control. Where is this new knowledge being principally utilized at the present time? In the offices of advertising agencies. Today as never before the man with something to sell knows how to turn into cash three fundamental aspects of human nature: the desire to attract the opposite sex, the desire to exert power over one's neighbors, the desire to get safely and honorably to heaven. In brief, the higher salesmanship has captured applied psychology, horse, foot, and guns. And the very knowledge which might render us significant help is turned against us to create new wants, new desires, new forms of waste. (Some psychologist should write, as he starves, a monograph entitled: *How to Build Up Sales Resistance*. No one will read it now, but in a hundred years he will have a statue in the market-place.)

The customer at large has today no standard of reference by which he can determine quality of goods. Only through the painful and wasteful method of trial and error can he hope to separate the shoddy from the sound. The shoddy-makers can say as impressive things about their product as the conscien-

tious manufacturer. A certain roofing concern fabricated a great stock in anticipation of Government orders during the War. The stock, after careful test, was rejected as inferior. Nothing daunted, the company, by means of a high-pressure sales campaign, disposed of the whole order to the general public. Yet here and there in well-equipped laboratories an enormous volume of data as to consumer products and their relative values for specific uses is being accumulated. The Bureau of Standards at Washington has been making such tests for years. As a result, the Federal Government saves a hundred million dollars annually by purchasing materials, not on the stimulation of high-pressure salesmanship, but according to specifications laid down by the Bureau. For building materials, textiles, clothing, soaps, cleansing fluids, lubricants, motors, paper stock, ink, stationery, hardware, leather goods—for nearly every kind of thing which the common citizen uses—the Government pays a lower price for a more durable product—a price *below* the usual discount for quantity orders because of the standards and specifications determined by the Bureau.

To date, unfortunately, it has not been the policy of the Government to release this knowledge to the country at large. Imagine the tearing of beards in the business world if it should! The Bureau of Standards in its laboratories has found out which makes of textiles stand up and which go to pieces, which paints and varnishes are good and which are bad, which inks keep their color and which do not, what types of filling-station pumps invariably give short weight; but so hallowed is the conception of private business that this knowledge has remained locked in Government files, serving only Government purposes.

"Sure," said an ex-Ford employee, "if I went on tightening up nut number 999 any longer, I'd have become nut number 999 myself." Industrial standardization is one of the mightiest achievements of the new technology, but it is a two-edged sword. Applied with due regard for the human equation, it

promises the elimination of untold duplication, confusion, and waste, and a tremendous gain in the general standard of living. Applied only from the point of view of the maximum profit in dollars, it can readily become an unmitigated curse. True to the formula of business *über alles*, it is the latter course which industry has pursued to date. Thirty years ago when Frederick W. Taylor was laying down the principles of Scientific Management, motion study was frankly an experiment. It promised well from the standpoint of increasing output, and nobody knew what it would do to the employee. Today we do know. Not completely and finally, but psychologists in industry have already developed the general laws governing the effects of rhythm, sound, vision, fatigue. They have estimated that of the million man-years lost annually in America by industrial accidents, a full half of them is preventable. We have a body of knowledge sufficient to fix the limits of factory standardization. Is it applied? It is not. With very little exception it is unutilized, wasted knowledge.

Nor is the standardization of the goods which the factory worker makes in much better state. Obviously, the great values here are maximum standardization in all intermediate processes: standard gauges, measurements, tools, supplies—combined with minimum standardization in those end products where variety adds to the spice of life. As Cornelia Stratton Parker puts it, "I see no reason why the aesthetic spirit of the nation would be degraded if we all used 21-inch sewer pipes instead of some 22-inch, but I don't want to see all women wearing the same hats." These values find little place in the going business structure. There is an appalling lack of standardization in intermediate processes and in end products, like sewer pipes, where standards have only virtue—a lack fostered by trade secrecy and the desire to secure competitive advantages. The United States Chamber of Commerce so far forgets itself as to assess this waste at one-quarter of all industrial effort in America. Meanwhile there is over-standardization in many end products

where variety is essential. Standardization is a magnificent technique when rightly used, but in the hands of the business motive it has so far succeeded only in running amuck.

One more item, and our inventory of the perversions of knowledge, while by no means complete, must end. Under the acquisitive organization of industry, society shares in new engineering devices, but only to a degree, and only after a period of maximum obstruction. Chief Clerk Woolard of the United States Patent Office states the case, "There are countless numbers of patents which, if in operation, would much cheapen the articles they could produce, but they are intentionally shelved to prevent competition. Concerns operating under old inventions for which they have expended great sums to erect plants buy up these new and cheaper methods to prevent competitors from getting hold of them. They then tuck them away in their safes, never to be used."

New inventions may not only be suppressed; they may be pre-suppressed. A concern may get patents on a whole series of processes in order to tie up the field for the next generation or more. The weighing-scale industry is said to have secured advanced patents (by taking them out on some foolish toy) sufficient to close the door to anyone else for twenty years. The ultimate social loss from this one case alone has been estimated at a hundred million dollars.

IV

A member of the United States Tariff Commission in a recent book has put the challenge squarely up to us: "The business world knows no waste unless the saving can be accomplished at a profit. What cannot be salvaged at a profit is not waste in the economic sense. As well talk of the waste of atmospheric nitrogen." And there we are. To release the data of the Bureau of Standards would be alarmingly unprofitable for many corporations. To restrict patent monopolies would stagger the

balance sheets of many more. To put the army to building bridges congeals the vitals of the private contractor; to liquidate the "blah" of advertising would shrink untold dividend checks; to make durable goods would lessen turnover. For every obstruction, every hindrance to the free flow of knowledge has been, so far as may be, capitalized at substantially what the traffic will bear. It earns a profit and is not waste in the business sense. To break its grip and bring technology to the direct relief of the community is treason to business principles and, therefore, unthinkable.

But as the inventory of planlessness and thwarted knowledge unrolls before us it almost moves us to the brink of treason. Why should we bow meekly before a dogma which, measured by its concrete results, has netted us so little in a century and a quarter? Why should we accept as an act of faith the somewhat preposterous theory that a few hundred thousand business men, each working within the high walls of his own back yard with never a look at the world outside, can provide the community at large with more and better food, shelter, and clothing than anyone else ever could?

Why dogma at all? Why does it have to be pure individualism versus pure collectivism, or pure coöperation? Why all the blood and tears over the "thin entering wedge"? Governor Smith of New York wants the State to develop the water power of the St. Lawrence, which the State owns. Owns, mind you. He is willing to let the distribution of that power remain in the hands of private business. Technically the combination is admirable. The dams and the turbines can be built and operated more economically by the State than by any private company, while distribution can quite possibly be handled more economically by those already skilled in the technique. Yet for this proposal, Governor Smith is held little better than a Bolshevik. Mr. Charles Evans Hughes on behalf of the Petroleum Institute has just petitioned the Government to let oil production go on committing hara-kiri—at the rate of three need-

lessly wasted barrels for every one reclaimed—because private enterprise must not be interfered with.

On all long-term projects dealing with the exploitation of natural resources, private business simply cannot afford to wait to exploit them systematically and with a minimum of waste. Forests have got to come down, oil-fields gush, the cream to be skimmed from coal and minerals, instant! The principles of profit demand it. Yet whenever and wherever it is proposed that the community handle such exploitation because only the community has the resources and the credit to develop the project according to technically sound principles, the thin opening wedge is brandished, and a thousand editors sniff treason. And so with any fundamental proposal for community planning.

There are doubtless many things that private business can do better and less wastefully than anyone else can do them. There are other things which the community through its government can do best. And still other things which coöperative groups within the community can excel in. It does not stand to reason that there is any one divine way of economic behavior for one hundred and sixteen millions of people over three thousand miles of continent. The assumption of high sanctuary by the theory of business anarchy is undoubtedly as much stuff and nonsense as one hundred per cent state socialism.

It must be more than a little of a bore to be a business man dedicated to a lifetime of unrelenting greed. No wonder he and his fellows go into conference, or play golf on the slightest excuse, or take specials to Florida, or wear paper hats, or grow maudlin about Service. There they stand, each in his own trough, a herd across whose backs no statecraft can hurdle. Good, decent citizens, mostly, but their dogmas are costing us all that the machine and the industrial arts and the billions of power slaves might have done for us.

And I guess—it may be a wild guess—that until we smash those dogmas Newburyport will continue to hold its own.

G. K. CHESTERTON

Gilbert Keith Chesterton was born in Kensington, London, in 1874, of Scotch and French ancestry. His education at St. Paul's School and the Slade School won him no honors, and it is not recorded that he was a brilliant student. His profound knowledge of human nature he has acquired for himself in the ways that only genius knows. At one time he was a clerk in a London office, but not for long. He soon turned to the reviewing of art books for *The Bookman* and from that to contributing to a long list of British publications.

His books began in 1903 with a life of Browning written for the "English Men of Letters" series. Then followed an astonishing variety of essays, poems, biographies, romances, detective stories, theological tracts, novels, literary critiques, plays, books of travel, and histories. It is not easy to separate the essays from this list, for so many of his writings bear the imprint of the essay style. *Charles Dickens* (1906) is a critical essay; *The Victorian Age in Literature* (1913) is an extended essay in literary history; one might even call his play, *Magic* (1913), an essay in defense of the miraculous.

However, the indubitable essays are to be found in *Heretics* (1905), *Orthodoxy* (1908), *All Things Considered* (1908), *Tremendous Trifles* (1909), *Alarms and Discursions* (1911), *The Uses of Diversity* (1921), *Fancies Versus Fads* (1923), from which "Turning Inside Out" is reprinted, and *The Outline of Sanity* (1927). *A Gleaming Cohort* (1926) is a handy selection from most of these books.

At the age of sixteen Mr. Chesterton is said to have turned agnostic and Socialist; but he soon returned to conservative ways of thought, becoming an ardent member of the Anglo-Catholic Church, the outgrowth of the Oxford Movement. His delight in orthodoxy and its accompanying certitudes makes him a medievalist in heart and mind, but, as Stuart P. Sherman pointed out, "he meets his adversaries with their own weapons of latest device and wields them with the accomplished ease and trenchancy of the deftest young Radical." The sophistication of his method and the crackle of his paradoxes must

not blind us to the fact that he is invariably a defender of the established order.

In "Turning Inside Out" Mr. Chesterton preaches a favorite doctrine, that the ancient and universal things are superior to the modern and specialist things—specifically, that woman should stay in the home not because she is inferior to man, but because she is capable of greater ends than man and, in the home, meets deeper and more elemental experiences than she could find in the world of business or politics. In another place he writes: "How can it be a large career to tell other people's children about the Rule of Three, and a small career to tell one's own children about the universe? How can it be broad to be the same thing to everyone, and narrow to be everything to someone? No; a woman's function is laborious, but because it is gigantic, not because it is minute. I will pity Mrs. Jones for the hugeness of her task; I will never pity her for its smallness."

TURNING INSIDE OUT*

G. K. CHESTERTON

When the author of *If Winter Comes*¹ brought out another book about the life of the family, it was almost as much criticized as the first book was praised. I do not say that there was nothing to criticize, but I do say that I was not convinced by the abstract logic of the criticism. Probably the critics would have accepted it as a true story if the author had not been so incautious as to give it a true moral. And the moral is not fashionable in the Press at the moment; for it is to the effect that a woman may gain a professional success at the price of domestic failure. And it is the convention of journalism at this moment to support what is feminist against what is feminine. Anyhow, while the story might be criticized, the criticisms can certainly be criticized. It is not really conclusive to say that a woman may be ambitious in business without her children going to the bad. It is just as easy to say that a woman may be ambitious in politics without helping to murder an old gentleman in his bed. But that does not make *Macbeth* either inartistic or untrue. It is just as easy to say that a woman may be ambitious in society without tricking her husband into a debtor's prison, so that she may spend the time with a bald-headed nobleman with red whiskers. But that does not make the great scene in *Vanity Fair* unconvincing either in detail or in design. The question in fiction is not whether that thing must occur, but whether that sort of thing may occur, and whether it is significant of larger things. Now this business of the woman at work and the woman at

*From *Fancies Versus Fads*. Copyright, 1923, by Dodd, Mead and Company, Inc. Reprinted by permission of the author and the publishers.

¹*If Winter Comes*, a novel by A. S. M. Hutchinson, followed by *This Freedom*.

home is a very large thing, and this story about it is highly significant.

For in this matter the modern mind is inconsistent with itself. It has managed to get one of its rather crude ideals in flat contradiction to the other. People of the progressive sort are perpetually telling us that the hope of the world is in education. Education is everything. Nothing is so important as training the rising generation. Nothing is really important except the rising generation. They tell us this over and over again, with slight variations of the same formula, and never seem to see what it involves. For if there be any word of truth in all this talk about the education of the child, then there is certainly nothing but nonsense in nine-tenths of the talk about the emancipation of the woman. If education is the highest function in the State, why should anybody want to be emancipated from the highest function in the State? It is as if we talked of commuting the sentence that condemned a man to be President of the United States; or a reprieve coming in time to save him from being Pope. If education is the largest thing in the world, what is the sense of talking about a woman's being liberated from the largest thing in the world? It is as if we were to rescue her from the cruel doom of being a poet like Shakespeare; or to pity the limitations of an all-round artist like Leonardo da Vinci. Nor can there be any doubt that there is truth in this claim for education. Only precisely the sort of which it is particularly true is the sort called domestic education. Private education really is universal. Public education can be comparatively narrow. It would really be an exaggeration to say that the schoolmaster who takes his pupils in freehand drawing is training them in all the uses of freedom. It really would be fantastic to say that the harmless foreigner who instructs a class in French or German is talking with all the tongues of men and angels. But the mother dealing with her own daughters in her own home does literally have to deal with all forms of freedom,

because she has to deal with all sides of a single human soul. She is obliged, if not to talk with the tongues of men and angels, at least to decide how much she shall talk about angels and how much about men.

In short, if education is really the larger matter, then certainly domestic life is the larger matter; and official or commercial life the lesser matter. It is a mere matter of arithmetic that anything taken from the larger matter will leave it less. It is a mere matter of simple subtraction that the mother must have less time for the family if she has more time for the factory. If education, ethical and cultural, really were a trivial and mechanical matter, the mother might possibly rattle through it as a rapid routine, before going about her more serious business of serving a capitalist for hire. If education were merely instruction, she might briefly instruct her babies in the multiplication tables, before she mounted to higher and nobler spheres as the servant of a Milk Trust or the secretary of a Drug Combine. But the moderns are perpetually assuring us that education is not instruction; they are perpetually insisting that it is not a mechanical exercise, and must on no account be an abbreviated exercise. It must go on at every hour. It must cover every subject. But if it must go on at all hours, it must not be neglected in business hours. And if the child is to be free to cover every subject, the parent must be free to cover every subject too.

For the idea of a non-parental substitute is simply an illusion of wealth. The advanced advocate of this inconsistent and infinite education for the child is generally thinking of the rich child; and all this particular sort of liberty should rather be called luxury. It is natural enough for a fashionable lady to leave her little daughter with the French governess or the Czecho-Slovakian governess or the Ancient Sanskrit governess, and know that one or other of these sides of the infant's intelligence is being developed; while she, the mother, figures in public as a money-lender or in some other modern position of

dignity. But among poorer people there cannot be five teachers to one pupil. Generally there are about fifty pupils to one teacher. There it is impossible to cut up the soul of a single child and distribute it among specialists. It is all we can do to tear in pieces the soul of a single schoolmaster, and distribute it in rags and scraps to a whole mob of boys. And even in the case of the wealthy child it is by no means clear that specialists are a substitute for spiritual authority. Even a millionaire can never be certain that he has not left out one governess, in the long procession of governesses perpetually under his marble portico; and the omission may be as fatal as that of the king who forgot to ask the bad fairy to the christening. The daughter, after a life of ruin and despair, may look back and say, "Had I but also had a Lithuanian governess, my fate as a diplomatist's wife in Eastern Europe would have been very different." But it seems rather more probable, on the whole, that what she would miss would not be one or other of these special accomplishments, but some common-sense code of morals or general view of life. The millionaire could, no doubt, hire a mahatma or mystical prophet to give his child a general philosophy. But I doubt if the philosophy would be very successful even for the rich child, and it would be quite impossible for the poor child. In the case of comparative poverty, which is the common lot of mankind, we come back to a general parental responsibility, which is the common sense of mankind. We come back to the parent as the person in charge of education. If you exalt the education, you must exalt the parental power with it. If you exaggerate the education, you must exaggerate the parental power with it. If you depreciate the parental power, you must depreciate the education with it. If the young are always right and can do as they like, well and good; let us all be jolly, old and young, and free from every kind of responsibility. But in that case do not come pestering us with the importance of education, when nobody has any authority to

educate anybody. Make up your mind whether you want unlimited education or unlimited emancipation, but do not be such a fool as to suppose you can have both at once.

There is evidence, as I have noted, that the more hard-headed people, even of the most progressive sort, are beginning to come back to realities in this respect. The new work of Mr. Hutchinson's is only one of many indications among the really independent intelligences, working on modern fiction, that the cruder culture of merely commercial emancipation is beginning to smell a little stale. The work of Miss Clemence Dane and even of Miss Sheila Kaye-Smith contains more than one suggestion of what I mean. People are no longer quite so certain that a woman's liberty consists of having a latchkey without a house. They are no longer wholly convinced that every housekeeper is dull and prosaic, while every bookkeeper is wild and poetical. And among the intelligent the reaction is actually strengthened by all the most modern excitements about psychology and hygiene. We cannot insist that every trick of nerves or train of thought is important enough to be searched for in libraries and laboratories, and not important enough for anybody to watch by simply staying at home. We cannot insist that the first years of infancy are of supreme importance, and that mothers are not of supreme importance; or that motherhood is a topic of sufficient interest for men, but not of sufficient interest for mothers. Every word that is said about the tremendous importance of trivial nursery habits goes to prove that being a nurse is not trivial. All tends to the return of the simple truth that the private work is the great one and the public work the small. The human house is a paradox, for it is larger inside than out.

But in the problem of private versus public life there is another neglected truth. It is true of many masculine problems as well as of this feminine problem. Indeed, feminism falls here into exactly the same mistake as militarism and

imperialism. I mean that anything on a grand scale gives the illusion of a grand success. Curiously enough, multiplication acts as a concealment. Repetition actually disguises failure. Take a particular man, and tell him to put on a particular kind of hat and coat and trousers and to stand in particular attitudes in the back garden; and you will have great difficulty in persuading yourself (or him) that he has passed through a triumph and transfiguration. Order four hundred such hats, and eight hundred such trousers, and you will have turned the fancy costume into a uniform. Make all the four hundred men stand in the special attitudes on Salisbury Plain, and there will rise up before you the spirit of a regiment. Let the regiment march past, and, if you have any life in you above the brutes that perish, you will have an overwhelming sense that something splendid has just happened, or is just going to begin. I sympathize with this moral emotion in militarism; I think it does symbolize something great in the soul which has given us the image of St. Michael.² But I also realize that in practical relations that emotion can get mixed up with an illusion. It is not really possible to know the characters of all the four hundred men in the marching column as well as one might know the character of the one man attitudinizing in the back garden. If all the four hundred men were individual failures, we could still vaguely feel that the whole thing was a success. If we know the one man to be a failure, we cannot think him a success.

That is why a footman has become rather a foolish figure, while a foot-soldier remains rather a sublime one. Or rather, that is one of the reasons; for there are others much more worthy. Anyhow, footmen were only formidable or dignified when they could come in large numbers like foot-soldiers—when they were in fact the feudal army of some great local family, having some of the loyalty of local patriotism. Then a livery was as dignified as a uniform, because it really was

²*St. Michael*, a warrior archangel.

a uniform. A man who said he served the Nevilles or rode with the Douglasses could once feel much like a man fighting for France or England. But military feeling is mob feeling, noble as mob feeling may be. Parading one footman is like lunching on one pea, or curing baldness by the growth of one hair. There ought not to be anything but a plural for flunkeys, any more than for measles or vermin or animalculæ or the sweets called "hundreds and thousands." Strictly speaking, I suppose that a logical Latinist could say, "I have seen an animalcula"; but I never heard of a child having the moderation to remark, "I have eaten a hundred and thousand." Similarly, any one of us can feel that to have hundreds and thousands of slaves, let alone soldiers, might give a certain imaginative pleasure in magnificence. To have one slave reveals all the meanness of slavery. For the solitary flunkey really is the man in fancy dress, the man standing in the back garden in the strange and fantastic coat and breeches. His isolation reveals our illusion. We find our failure in the back garden, when we have been dreaming a dream of success in the market-place. When you ride through the streets amid a great mob of vassals (you may have noticed) you have a genial and not ungenerous sense of being at one with them all. You cannot remember their names or count their numbers, but their very immensity seems a substitute for intimacy. That is what great men have felt at the head of great armies; and the reason why Napoleon or Foch would call his soldiers "*mes enfants*." He feels at that moment that they are a part of him, as if he had a million arms and legs. But it is very different if you disband your army of lackeys; or if (as is, after all, possible) you have not got an army of lackeys. It is very different if you look at one lackey; one solitary solemn footman standing in your front hall. You never have the sense of being caught up into a rapture of unity with *him*. All your sense of social solidarity with your social inferiors has dropped from you. It is only in public that people can be so intimate as that. When you look into

the eyes of the lonely footman, you see that his soul is far away.

In other words, you find yourself at the foot of a steep and staggering mountain crag that is the real character and conscience of a man. To be really at one with that man, you would have to solve real problems and believe that your own solutions were real. In dealing with the one man you would really have a far huger and harder job than in dealing with your throng of thousands. And *that* is the job that people run away from when they wish to escape from domesticity to public work, especially educational work. They wish to escape from a sense of failure which is simply a sense of fact. They wish to recapture the illusion of the market-place. It is an illusion that departs in the dark interiors of domesticity, where the realities dwell. As I have said, I am very far from condemning it altogether; it is a lawful pleasure, and a part of life, in its proper proportion, like any other. But I am concerned to point out to the feminists and the faddists that it is not an approach to truth, but rather the opposite. Publicity is rather of the nature of a harmless romance. Public life at its very best will contain a great deal of harmless romancing, and much more often a very harmful romancing. In other words, I am concerned with pointing out that the passage from private life to public life, while it may be right or wrong, or necessary or unnecessary, or desirable or undesirable, is always of necessity a passage from a greater work to a smaller one, and from a harder work to an easier one. And that is why most of the moderns do wish to pass from the great domestic task to the smaller and easier commercial one. They would rather provide the liveries of a hundred footmen than be bothered with the love-affairs of one. They would rather serve out income-tax papers or telegraph forms to a hundred men than meals, conversation, and moral support to one. They would rather arrange the educational course in history or geography, or correct the examination papers in algebra or trigonometry, for a hundred children,

than struggle with the whole human character of one. For anyone who makes himself responsible for one small baby, as a whole, will soon find that he is wrestling with gigantic angels and demons.

In another way there is something of illusion, or of irresponsibility, about the purely public function, especially in the case of public education. The educationist generally deals with only one section of the pupil's life. The parent has to deal, not only with the whole of the child's character, but also with the whole of the child's career. The teacher sows the seed, but the parent reaps as well as sows. The schoolmaster sees more children, but it is not clear that he sees more childhood; certainly he sees less youth and no maturity. The number of little girls who take prussic acid is necessarily small. The boys who hang themselves on bedposts, after a life of crime, are generally the minority. But the parent has to envisage the whole life of the individual, and not merely the school life of the scholar. It is not probable that the parent will exactly anticipate crime and prussic acid as the crown of the infant's career. But he will anticipate hearing of the crime if it is committed; he will probably be told of the suicide if it takes place. It is quite doubtful whether the schoolmaster or schoolmistress will ever hear of it at all. Everybody knows that teachers have a harassing and often heroic task, but it is not unfair to them to remember that in this sense they have an exceptionally happy task. The cynic would say that the teacher is happy in never seeing the results of his own teaching. I prefer to confine myself to saying that he has not the extra worry of having to estimate it from the other end. The teacher is seldom in at the death. To take a milder theatrical metaphor, he is seldom there on the night. But this is only one of many instances of the same truth: that what is called public life is not larger than private life, but smaller. What we call public life is a fragmentary affair of sections and seasons and impressions; it is only in private life that dwells the fullness of our life bodily.

LINCOLN COLCORD

Lincoln (Ross) Colcord, offspring of five generations of seafaring folk, was born at sea off Cape Horn in 1883. The first fourteen years of his life were spent, for the most part, on salt water, as the boy accompanied his father on voyages to China and trading trips about the China Sea. When he was finally left in the village of Searsport, Maine, to get an education, it is not to be wondered at that he attended school irregularly and later, at the University of Maine, left in the middle of his junior year. In 1922, however, he received the honorary M. A. of a forgiving alma mater.

From 1906 to 1909 he worked in the Maine woods as a civil engineer with the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad. In the latter year he began the writing of short stories, and since then has followed the profession of journalist and free-lance writer. During our participation in the World War he was a Washington correspondent for the *Philadelphia Public Ledger*. In 1919-1920 he was an associate editor of *The Nation*.

He has published *The Drifting Diamond* (1912), an Oriental tale; *The Game of Life and Death* (1914) and *An Instrument of the Gods* (1922), collections of sea stories; and *Vision of War* (1915), a long poem. He ably translated from the Norwegian O. E. Rölvaag's *Giants in the Earth* (1927).

"Conversation in a Garden" may owe something of its philosophical charm to the influence of those early years in China.

CONVERSATION IN A GARDEN*

LINCOLN COLCORD

We speak of many things in the garden of my friend the Chinese sage. It is a stimulating environment. Men come and go, bringing the news of the world; while the broad yellow river flows by unceasingly, as if bearing a bountiful yet unhurried gift from the heart of China. Swelling behind the tall bamboos and prominent from every path, this river dominates the garden; it is an old and placid flood, long settled in the landscape; it fills the pauses of the conversation with a note of dignity and power. To it Lisseh often turns in silence, waiting for us to understand.

Sitting this morning in the rose arbor at the foot of the garden, we were joined by an American, a traveler in the East; one whom we had known in youth but had not seen for years. Talk fell, almost inevitably in this grave period, on the future of races and lands; and in the course of talk our friend from the West uttered a familiar platitude. "But it is admitted," he said, in answer to Lisseh's last remark, "that children should rise above their parents."

"Who admits it?" inquired our host. "And tell me, further, what, exactly, do you mean?"

"I fail to understand you," answered the other. "How is a country to progress, unless children rise above their parents?"

"That is a form of words," replied Lisseh. "Tell me, now, what idea do you wish to convey by the word 'progress,' and what by the word 'rise'?"

"By both, I mean advance."

*From *The Freeman*, July 19, 1922. Reprinted by permission of the author and the publishers.

"Advance along what course, and to what end? There are many ways to advance, and some are to retrogress; there are many ways to rise, and some are to fall. But let us take a concrete instance. Let us consider, for example, the case of a farmer with three sons. How shall these sons rise above their parents, and how shall their rise help to advance the land?"

"By being ambitious, by going out into the world and getting ahead."

"I see that I understand you correctly," said our host. "The sons of our farmer must go to the city, and enter the world of business; they must abandon the life of production, and take up mercantile affairs. They must forsake simple ways of living for ways more complex and expensive. Thus, by unconscious stages, they must pass into another economic sphere. On a visit home, they must smile at the simple transactions of the farm, with the mature view of men accustomed to deal in larger matters. With condescension tempered by loyalty they must look upon their humble birthplace, thinking of it, as they go about the fields, in terms of vast improvements; full of a vague desire to leave the artificial life that they have chosen, yet never for an instant seriously considering the step. Observing their mother in the kitchen, they must wonder how she likes to do her own housework, feeling a secret shame for her common tastes, although they love her dearly. When their father rises with the sun to begin his daily tasks, they must feel that, worthy parent as he is, he yet lacks those essential qualities which place men in a position to hire their meed of labor done for them. If one of the sons has remained at home to help conduct the farm, he is regarded as the least spirited and ambitious of the three; the others look on him as someone who has, in a measure, failed in life, while he looks up to them in bitter emulation and unhappiness. Withal, these sons, in their conversation with men of like origin and attainments in the city, religiously

express great pride in their early training, attributing to it their whole success in life; and when they are called on to speak or write, advising the youth of the land, they invariably preach the worth of poverty and labor, and the virtue of simplicity, not as legitimate aims of life, but rather as useful aids to the achievement of success. Yet, cruelly enough, they deny their own sons these priceless advantages. Such men, I take it, are those who have risen above their parents, and who have contributed to the progress of the land?"

"You have taken one of many cases," objected the American. "All the sons of worthy parents are not of so mean a nature as you have just outlined."

"Your observation is significant," said Lisseh. "For I have outlined a somewhat generous, albeit thoughtless, nature; yet the picture seems ignoble to your eyes. I met many such men when I lived and traveled in your land. In fact, are they not typical? Theirs is the spirit which educates the young. It runs on the air, it is heard in the speech of men; and you have just avowed it, half a world away. It is the mainspring of your politics, the motive of your government. It feeds the roots of your culture: as the individual is, so is society. The boys must go up from the country to the city. The farmer must graduate to the factory. The son of the laborer must become a merchant. It is more ambitious to trade than to produce, to buy and sell the work of others than to work with one's own hands. It is more ambitious to draw a salary than to be one's own paymaster. The aim of life is to acquire riches; the use of riches is to escape labor; the goal of true ambition is a state of inactivity. In the many and widespread streams of your philosophy, in education, in business, in the press, in the precepts of the home, and even, I surmise, in the teachings of your institutional religion, the lines converge toward a single end, namely, the creation of a society founded on wealth and of a civilization motivated by material power. In this sense, my illustration was a good

one. The sons of our farmer must become richer than their father, for to be richer is to rise; and a land with sons richer than their fathers is an advancing land."

"Quite so," said the American. "By enriching themselves, the sons enrich the land, and the land advances. That is simple logic."

"If to enrich the land were to advance the land. But we have not yet defined the nature of true advance. I deduce, from what you said just now, that the way you have in mind for children to rise above their parents, and for a country to advance, is a way purely of material."

"I do not follow you."

"The inference is plain. You assume that an increase in material well-being, both for the individual and for the land, involves automatically, as it were, a corresponding increase in spiritual well-being. Thus you assume that to go from the country to the city is a broadening experience: that familiarity with modern conveniences is an achievement of character; that to engage in business requires more ability than to engage in production; that to be worthy of a salary demands a higher degree of intelligence than to be worthy of one's own hire. Along with these comforting illusions has grown the pleasant fiction that business involves harder labor than production, that the man who trades and speculates with the work of others himself works hardest of all, and that a legitimate proof of this lies in the measure of riches which he has acquired; so that it is the fashion for men of business to groan together concerning the grievous nature of their toil, pitying themselves, and remarking bitterly the selfishness and ingratitude of those who labor merely with their hands. In short, is it not assumed, my friend, as the basis of your civilization, that material culture and spiritual culture are one and the same?"

"It is, indeed!" exclaimed the American. "Throughout this discussion, Lisseh, you have steadfastly ignored the great benefits which the prosperous sons of farmers have conferred

on their day and generation; you have steadfastly belittled the main results of their achievement. The telephone, the telegraph, the lightening of toil, increased leisure, the opening up of the ends of the earth, widely-distributed comforts, the wonderful inventions, the marvelous machines . . . ”

“On the contrary, good friend,” interrupted Lisseh, “I have spoken only of these matters. I have been calling them to your attention. I have reminded you that they are things, not ideas; that they represent material, not spiritual, values; their virtue depends on the uses to which they are put. To work with machines is not better than to work with hands, unless the spiritual value of the process is enhanced thereby. Leisure carries no intrinsic worth; it belongs also to lazy men and fools. I look in vain, in the midst of modern improvements, for an improvement in character; I do not find an invention for perfecting beauty, or a machine for making truth. As for leisure, show me first what the man of machinery does with his free hours. No man is worthy of leisure until he has disclosed that spirit of true living which puts labor itself to spiritual uses, and derives character from toil.”

“You mean that he must love his work? That is not always possible.”

“Why not? It is his human duty. Why should he do what he does not love? I have known men who loved to fell trees, and men who loved to work in wood, and men who loved to labor in the fields. I have known men who loved to sail ships, and men who loved to explore dangerous places, and men who loved to stay at home. I have known men who loved to raise animals. I have known men who loved to dig gold, and men who loved to work in gold. I have known men who loved to address crowds, and men who loved to tend sheep in solitude. I have known men who loved to hunt and fish, and men who loved to study, and men who loved to paint pictures, and men who loved to play with words. In lands which retain their simplicity, no natural occupation lacks its devotees.

But this is true, that man cannot love his work unless he owns his work; to love to work for others is mere servility. In days of handicraft, man owned his work; but now machinery has stolen his work from him, to make the riches of our farmer's sons."

"You are a theorist!" exclaimed the American. "Your talk is wildly unpractical. It is absurd to say that all the vast achievements of our day are not sound improvement. Look how the standard of living has been raised."

"I am more concerned with the standard of thinking. And what of the standard of dying? From all that I read, this standard was higher in your past generations."

"But do you say that man must return to handicraft? Do you say that he cannot learn to improve his leisure?"

"I say the contrary. Yet it will not come about in the way you have in mind. Man will not conquer life in ease and comfort. His task is double now. First he must conquer his machinery. As for the question of handicraft, which in reality revolves on the factor of ownership, that matter is easily and simply settled. In due time man will recover, machines and all, the work which has been stolen from him. Then he can labor once more in joy and satisfaction; for labor, and not the lightening of it, is his true goal. He must create, or he will die. Yours is a faith in humanity founded on false premises. It is founded on the premise that labor is unworthy, and that to escape labor is to gain a victory. Thus you create a society wherein boys are taught to strive for riches as the gate to impotence."

"Nonsense! Machinery has freed man for better uses than manual labor."

"There are no better uses for man than manual labor. But let us return to the argument. I understand you to admit that progress would not be a true advance unless it carried spiritual value; and you hold, moreover, that such a spiritual value inheres in the process of rising above one's father."

"That is the ideal of Western civilization."

"But, tell me, are the sons of our farmer, they who acquire riches, and, as you express it, get ahead, likely to show an increase in rectitude, in personal integrity, over that of their father?"

"Perhaps not always. The honor of men varies alike on the farm and in the world of business. The man of wealth, you must remember, deals with different factors, and meets a life of keener competition."

"Does he, indeed? Are they who dwell in the city, then, meeting and passing a million men every day, likely to gain a wider knowledge of human nature, a better judgment of life, a finer spirit of justice and tolerance, a deeper sympathy with the intimate problems and struggles of humanity, than he who has always lived in a small community, knowing only the lives of his neighbors?"

"That depends on the man. In a sense, the small community offers the better opportunity along these particular lines."

"I think so. But tell me, again, are these sons who become men of wealth, in control of privilege, likely to develop a more honorable conception of politics, a truer understanding of democracy, a firmer grasp of citizenship, a fuller knowledge of the public welfare, than he who views such problems from the simple standpoint of the farm and village?"

"I think they are, Lisseh. They know the inside of matters which the farmer cannot grasp."

"Good! You feel that the man of wealth must, in the nature of his power and position, have a sounder understanding of the principles and practices of government than he who has never been beyond the limits of the town. This is significant. It shows that you are thinking of government, as well, in terms of material. For what the man of wealth understands is the manipulation of government to his own ends; and what the controller of privilege sees in government is not what is best for the State, but what is best for him in the

State. Against the encroachments of these, the safeguard of the State is he who has the least to gain."

"Your attitude is wholly prejudiced."

"Not so, my friend. It is you who have forgotten the cardinal principle of your democracy, which is that no man can be trusted with the control of privilege. But is the man of business likely to acquire more learning, to know more of history and literature and philosophy, than he who reads a few good books but meditates much upon them? In short, are the sons of our farmer likely to be more enlightened than their father?"

"Perhaps not—that depends on what you mean by enlightenment. The man of business has scant time for reading. He has plenty of practical knowledge. Life is his book."

"But you have already admitted that the book of life is better known to our farmer than to his sons. Are the sons, then, likely to view society with clearer vision, to discern more accurately the trend and aim of social progress, and thus to live more wisely, endeavoring to establish and maintain institutions of greater worth and permanence, than he who sees the relation of man to man in its native and intrinsic simplicity?"

"You do not take account of the fact that the problems of society are constantly changing. The farmer rarely is abreast of the times."

"Only the garment changes; the naked form remains the same. It is the form of life; its problems are love, labor, creation, honest living and noble dying. Here in China we have five thousand years of uninterrupted history; thus we know how little actual change there is. But now that we have analyzed the proposition, it is plain to you, is it not, that what you meant to say in the beginning was this: If sons are richer than their fathers, the land will increase in riches. This is both true and obvious; but by using finer words, and speaking of the rise of children and the progress of lands, you threw about

the subject the glamour of idealism, making it appear that what you had in mind was real superiority for the individual and cultural improvement for the land. The analysis, however, having discovered that riches is riches, leaves these other matters open to demonstration. So it appears, my friend, either that the land of our farmer's sons is not advancing, or that material rather than spiritual increase is the true advance. One or the other conclusion must be accepted; it is the merest hypocrisy to try to join the two. Which do you choose?"

The American remained for some time silent, puzzling over these absurdities. The practice of logic was a difficult exercise for him. While we waited, our host gazed at the yellow river, flowing steadily past the garden and on toward the sea.

"I choose the former," said Lisseh at last, as the other still refused to answer. "When I find men of business limiting, for the sake of truth, the acquisition of gain; or when I find men of wealth sincerely seeking poverty; or when I find traders and speculators assisting the process of production; or when I find bankers and statesmen working in the public welfare, and honoring the art of life; or when, in general, I find men anxious to labor without becoming rich, rather than anxious to become rich without labor; then, my friend, I may agree with you that, in the sense in which you intended your theorem, the rise of sons above their fathers entails the advancement of the land."

"Lisseh, you are incorrigible!" exclaimed our visitor testily, preparing to depart. "You are a fanatic. You are out of joint with the world."

The sage smiled as he continued to gaze at the placid river. "Wait a thousand years, my friend," he said, "and I will speak with you again."

SAMUEL McCHORD CROTHERS

The death of Samuel McChord Crothers in 1927 deprived American letters of its most beloved essayist. Gracious, urbane, witty, liberal, sane—these and other adjectives can properly be applied to the man or to his writings alike; but Dr. Crothers's essential quality was his capacity for friendliness, either through the daily contacts of his rich life or through the pages of his books. Striking testimony to the engaging influence of his writings was given by the hundreds of letters which, after his death, Mrs. Crothers received from unknown readers. For Dr. Crothers was a familiar essayist of the school of Elia, and his essays were inwrought with his personality.

Born in Oswego, Illinois, in 1857, he was a student at Wittenberg College, Princeton University, Union Theological Seminary, and Harvard Divinity School. His early career in the Presbyterian ministry threw him into the frontier life of Nevada and California. In 1882, having entered the Unitarian church, he went to New England, eventually accepting the pastorate of the First Parish Church, Cambridge, Massachusetts. In this congenial post he was, for thirty-three years, friend and counselor to generations of Harvard undergraduates who "left Cambridge a little more civilized because of his spirit."

In his essays, no less than in his sermons, is a pervading sense of the past which enables him to view the follies of his time without excitement and without bitterness. Yet, however gentle his manner, however friendly his flavor, the personality reflected in his essays is built upon a shrewd and happy sanity. This quality, applied to literary criticism, is peculiarly evident in "A Social Survey of the Literary Slums," one of the last and best of the long list of Dr. Crothers's contributions to *The Atlantic Monthly*. To name the titles of the volumes in which his essays are collected is to call a roll of friends: *The Gentle Reader* (1903), *The Pardoner's Wallet* (1905), *By the Christmas Fire* (1908), *Among Friends* (1910), *Humanly Speaking* (1912), *The Pleasures of an Absentee Landlord and Other Essays* (1916), *The Dame School of Experience* (1920), *The Cheerful Giver* (1923). A last volume, *The Thought Broker and Other Papers*, was published in the fall of 1928.

A SOCIAL SURVEY OF THE LITERARY SLUMS*

SAMUEL McCHORD CROTHERS

I

There are few fields that social reformers, armed with instruments of precision, have not entered. They have investigated tenements, country houses, stables, cotton mills, match factories, steel works, slaughterhouses, churches, and universities. There are better-business organizations to raise the standards of business, wholesale and retail. Things sanitary and things industrial and things intimately domestic are looked into by persons trained for the purpose. The individual is not allowed to go his own way. The public is recognized as a party in interest. The world is being made safe for the workingman. Sickness is not a private matter. The guardians of the public health are not content to notice the general facts of morbidity and mortality. They seek the causes. Without regard to the prejudices of the householder, they poke into ash cans and dark closets, measure the width of alleys, test the plumbing, call attention to articles left on the fire escape, make notes on wages, compute the number of hours lost by reason of illness, inquire into the profits of landlords, and ascertain the number of arrests for juvenile delinquency.

But there is one class that has been strangely overlooked by investigators. It is the class of literary workers—the makers of books, magazine articles, poems, plays, and the like. These articles are manufactured in great quantities and are looked upon as necessities by that portion of the community known as the literates. But the hard-working industrialists who produce these wares have hitherto been immune from investigation. Literary people have long been known as “the irritable

*From *The Thoughts Broker and Other Papers*. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1928. Reprinted by permission of Mrs. Samuel McChord Crothers and the publishers.

race," and their natural irritability has been increased by every attempt to impose non-literary tests upon them. They have insisted on complete independence. If a work is good from a purely literary standpoint, they say that is enough. Whether it is an offense against good morals or an outrage against good sense makes no difference. The clever author claims the rights of extraterritoriality. Literature sets up its own courts, and claims to be a law unto itself.

But literary artists cannot expect to be let alone any more than the rest of us. When there is so much salutary curiosity about the number of bacteria in the milk can, the public should not be expected to be indifferent to the dangers that lurk in the inkstand.

I was therefore not surprised to find that a society has been formed to investigate the conditions under which literary work is performed, to safeguard the health of the workers, to study the occupational diseases to which literary people are subject, and to keep consumers informed of the facts. The society is well organized, with national headquarters and regional superintendents and a large and highly respectable advisory committee.

I have before me a pamphlet published by the society, entitled *Proposals for a Social Survey of Literary Slums*.

Let me say at once that anyone who takes up the circular with the expectation that it will gratify the slumming instinct will be disappointed. Personalities are avoided; there is no directory of objectionable literary characters. The evident aim is scientific, and there is no attempt at the sensational. Indeed a considerable part of the circular is given over to an appeal for funds. This is a necessity in all enterprises of an educational character and tends to stabilize them. One who appeals for funds will never put his proposals in so radical a form as to alarm the large contributor.

Leaving out the financial appeals, I will give some quotations which will show the nature of the new proposals.

II

"While so many social agencies are investigating labor conditions, it is not strange that the public should be unaware of a quiet and painstaking work that is going on in the study of literary slums and their effect on the public health. Indeed it is the policy of our association to avoid publicity, and only the urgent need of more funds to carry on our investigation has led us to make any publication at this time. Everyone is aware of the good work which has been done for a number of years by the Consumers' League. That society works upon the assumption that the consumer has a right to know the conditions under which the goods he buys are manufactured. It makes it its business to supply necessary information and to insist upon proper standards. This is in the interest of both producer and consumer.

"But hitherto nothing has been done for literary workers. We have followed the theories of early nineteenth-century individualism, rather than the philosophy of the twentieth century with its emphasis on social welfare. Very little attention has been paid to the unemployed or unemployable, or to the plight of the casual worker or to those whose occupation is only seasonal. Such a problem as the juvenile delinquencies of poets has hardly been touched. There is a lack of statistical information on many vital points.

"More than a hundred years ago Shelley wrote:

A poet there was who sat by a ditch,
And he took an old cracked lute,
And he sang a song that was more of a screech.
'Gainst a woman who was a brute.

At that time such a case would be looked upon as one for private commiseration, though even then it must have been evident that what the poet needed was not alms but a candid friend. But by the socially-minded person of our day the case cannot be so easily dismissed. And when a score of poets

sit by a ditch and give a combined screech we recognize the fact that we are dealing with a social question. It is necessary to investigate the ditch and examine the old cracked lutes.

"The literary critic of the old school is like the judge at a cattle show who judges according to the points the cattle breeders have agreed upon. But the modern representative of the State comes to the owner of a herd of fancy Jerseys and insists on looking them over. He cares not a fig for the blue ribbons, but insists on applying the tuberculin test.

"Literary persons, when there is any talk of outside interference with their calling, raise the cry of Victorianism or Puritanism. This is barking up the wrong tree. The Puritan would object to a book because it was unscriptural. The Victorian would object to it because it shocked the proprieties. The social investigator asks, 'What is its ascertainable effect on the mind of the reader?' This is pure fact-finding, and should be carried on without prejudice. No preconceived theory must be allowed to interfere with the experiments. We must be prepared to accept new evidence when it is presented.

"It used to be supposed that clothing worn by yellow-fever patients carried the disease. Experiment proved that this was not the case. It used to be supposed that unpleasant-looking water was always unwholesome and clear water was safe. Now we send the sparkling water from a suspected spring to be analyzed.

"A book does something to us. It may put us to sleep, it may infuriate us, it may inspire us, it may depress us, it may make us feel that life is not worth living and that the bottom has dropped out of the universe. The author may say that this is none of his business. He lives for his art, and what happens to us is no concern of his. We answer, 'You may be right. It may be none of your business, but it is very much our business. When we put food in our mouths, it is not for the encouragement of a temperamental grocer. It is because we think that it is good for us. The food must agree with us and not merely with him.'

"It is the same with what we put into our minds.

That book is good
Which puts me in a working mood.

That is what I read it for. I do not propose to sacrifice my intellectual health for the sake of another man's art. My mind may not be of the first order, but it is the only one I have, and I can't afford to sacrifice it.

"The case of Typhoid Mary is familiar to all social workers. This excellent woman, who was herself immune, went about innocently diffusing typhoid germs. She was a carrier. In a way she was not to blame for her exceptionally strong constitution, but the fact that she herself enjoyed good health made her all the more a menace to the community.

"Compare the careful investigation that discovers such a carrier of disease with the way we treat a book that is under suspicion. One person reads a book and declares that it is immoral; then another person reads it to see if it is as bad as it was reported to be; then a large number of persons who have not time to read the book discuss it acrimoniously. Then the emancipated critics say that if it is suspected of immorality that is *prima facie* evidence that it is a work of genius. Then the careful parent says that at any rate it is not the kind of book to be put into the hands of his daughter. Then his daughter tells him that he needn't worry; she read it last summer, and anyone who is still talking about it is 'dated.' Then the discussion begins all over again, with a more recent book as the point of departure.

"Such antiquated discussions would not be tolerated in any district conference of the Family Welfare Society. Even the most inactive Board of Health would not approve canned goods suspected of containing ptomaines because one of the members admired the picture pasted on the cans. They would test the food in a scientific way instead of waiting for the result of a post mortem on one of the consumers.

III

"A New Testament writer declares that evil communications corrupt good manners. But only careful experimentation can determine to what extent and under what conditions these communications can be made through literature. Cold print is not a good culture medium for certain sins. Just why this is so we have not ascertained—we only note the facts.

"Thus our experts have made a careful study of two thousand detective stories to ascertain their effect upon the conduct of their readers. The readers investigated were judges, magistrates, bankers, bishops and other clergy who by their own confession were addicted to this kind of literature. Contrary to what might have been expected, there were no reports of crimes against life and property that could be traced to such midnight reading. Our investigations seem to point to the probability that the specific germs of burglary, murder, arson, and piracy are not viable in printed matter. They require personal contacts. At any rate, it is obvious that certain classes of the community have a high degree of immunity.

"On the other hand, an investigation of the effect of so-called sex novels reveals a real danger. In dealing with it, however, the public should have more expert advice than that usually at the disposal of legislators. The law can only deal with passages that are 'shocking.' It is much less dangerous for the moral sensibilities to be shocked than for them to be lulled to sleep by an insidious poison.

"The real watch and ward must be like that which Edmund Spenser¹ described as kept in the stately House of Temperance.

Within the barbican a porter sate,
 Day and night duely keeping watch and ward.
 Nor wight nor word mote passe out of the gate
 But in good order and with dew regard;
 Utterers of secrets he from thence debared,
 Bablers of folly and blazers of cryme.

¹Edmund Spenser (1552-1599), author of *The Faerie Queene*.

"To be safe, each mind must have its own warder, and it will not do to hand over his work to the chief of police.

"Leaving each individual free in matters of taste, and refusing to interfere with his personal affairs, our commission confines itself to the matters which concern the public. We wish to ascertain the causes of literary diseases, rather than to deal merely with symptoms. The reading class is dependent on the labor of the writing class. It has a right to know how the other half lives. It must be able to discriminate between literature that is produced under wholesome conditions and that which is the product of the slums.

"What constitutes a slum? It is not simply a place where poor people live. Poverty can be clean, self-respecting, and healthy. But the poverty of the slums is of a different kind. It is the result of overcrowding. There are too many people herded together, too little light, too little air, too little wholesome food, too little opportunity for recreation. Human beings crowded together are stunted. There is no room for the full development of personality. All sorts of morbidities and abnormalities appear.

"Nobody plans a slum, and therefore it is hard to get anybody to feel responsibility for it. It is a condition that comes when there is no intelligent planning. Hence the need of socially-minded people to point out actual conditions. It was discovered that some of the worst slums in London and New York were owned by excellent people who were unaware of what was going on. Even churches have been guilty of gross carelessness in this respect.

"Many persons would be surprised to know how many books there are that are produced under slum conditions. They are the product of minds that are overcrowded, undernourished, and with a shameful lack of ventilation. When a number of slovenly minds are working in close contiguity, the results are deplorable. They have no leisure to grow wise, and quickly lose any desire to do so. Yet they are very prolific.

"The results of overcrowding and undernourishment are apparent in the history of literature. The reader of the *Dunciad*²—and everyone should read the *Dunciad* once a year—is familiar with the recriminations of the literary proletariat in the time of Queen Anne. It is evident that literature was recognized as a sweated industry. There were too many poets competing with one another for a precarious living. The notorious slum called Grub Street was literally swarming with young persons who had come to London to live by their wits. There were penny-a-liners waiting for such hack work as might be offered by the printers; there were versifiers with a pretty knack of turning off complimentary odes; there were pamphleteers, strong-arm men, literary bravos who could be hired by great men to do their dirty work. Then there were private brawls carried on with much inkshed.

"The impression we receive is of a feverish struggle for literary existence, a terrible pressure of the poetical population on the means of subsistence.

"Pope writes:

When sick of muse our follies we deplore
And promise our best friends to write no more,
We wake next morning in a raging fit,
And call for pen and ink to show our wit.
For those who cannot write and those who can
All rime and scrawl and scribble to a man.

"We recall Swift's familiar lines:

Every creature
Lives in a state of war by nature.
Each poet of inferior size
On you shall rail and criticize.
So naturalists observe a flea
Hath smaller fleas that on him prey
And these have smaller fleas to bite 'em
And so proceed *ad infinitum*.

²*The Dunciad*, Alexander Pope's satirical poem (1728), directed against his literary contemporaries.

Thus every poet in his kind
Is bit by him who comes behind
Who though too little to be seen
Can tease and gall and give the spleen.

Thus, he says, they 'lay Grub Street at each other's door.'

"The Industrial Revolution changed all that. Grub Street has been improved out of existence. Literature, like everything else, has felt the effect of the factory system and the manifold efficiencies of big business. The industrious writer shares in the benefits of quantity production, standardization of product, better marketing methods, and up-to-date advertising. Without waste motion, he can turn out an unlimited number of short stories with interchangeable parts, and of perfect uniformity. Nothing is left to the curiosity of the reader, who knows just what he is buying. All this is in the interest of intellectual economy.

IV

"But though the Industrial Revolution has accomplished so much, the evils of overcrowding are still painfully manifest. Wherever too many persons of the same kind crowd together, slum conditions are bound to be created. It doesn't matter what they are trying to do—if there are too many of them they get into each other's way. In the Middle Ages many of the larger monasteries fell into a slummy condition. Too many people were trying to be good without allowing each other sufficient elbow-room, and they made a mess of it. Theodore Parker used to say to his brother ministers in Boston, 'Ministers are like cabbages—they don't head well when they grow too close together.' Even college professors feel the need of a sabbatical year when they can get away from their own kind.

"Nowhere are the effects of overcrowding more painful than among literary workers. Their mentality suffers from too close proximity. Under such circumstances their minds do not stand alone. They tend to stick together in a glutinous mass. After

a time they come to pride themselves on their intellectual stickiness.

"From time to time epidemics sweep through the congested districts of literary centers. They are often mistaken for significant movements, and the more nervous intellectuals are alarmed for the future of civilization. But the illiterates and semi-literates who live in the open country go their way as if nothing had happened. Their immunity is very fortunate for the race.

"Just now there is an epidemic almost exclusively literary—which is characterized by excessively low spirits. The talented writers indulge in the most lugubrious prognostications. Their tone is consistently querulous. They feel in duty bound to resist any tendency to joy, freedom, resiliency. Whether in prose or in verse, they take dismal views of the present and of the future. The only comfort they allow themselves is in the thought that the past was probably still worse. They cultivate the sardonic and refuse any little alleviations that may be suggested by the natural man. What strikes one is the singular synchronism in their emotions. They utter their shrill lamentations as if they were obeying a cheer leader. A single person who felt that way might be interesting, but there are too many of them. These birds of a feather flock together—all molting at the same time.

"We have watched these cases with considerable solicitude. Our commission is investigating the environmental influences which tend to depress the spirits of the literary worker. Our agents who have been dealing with child labor have made some valuable suggestions. The great objection to child labor is that, by subjecting nerves and muscles to a premature strain, the victim is deprived of that elastic strength necessary for the varied activities of manhood.

"It is suggested that many writers are stunted because they have been set to tasks too great for their mental age. Their faculties have not been given time to mature, and they have

tried to express what they have not yet experienced. There is evidence of malnutrition. There is gristle where there should be bone. There are many symptoms of intellectual rickets. When the author tries to be more clever than he is, the effort is bound to tell upon him. Many a promising novel has been spoiled by premature publication. The author has not allowed sufficient time for the book to catch up with the jacket. He should be reminded of Lord Chesterfield's remark that a wise man is as careful to live within his wit as he is to live within his income. Here is a field in which our society is undertaking welfare work. We have opened up a department of preventive literature.

"Charles Lamb wrote a discriminating essay on 'The Melancholy of Tailors,' but he did not suggest that the melancholy infected the suits they sent out from their shops. But the melancholy of poets gets into their poems, and it is catching. Unlike burglary, which, as we have said, does not seem to be spread through literary media, a tired feeling is easily communicated from the writer to the susceptible reader. Hence the need of isolation.

"As contributors like to have a little human interest injected into the reports of societies they are prepared to support, we have ventured to insert a letter which we have received from one of our most resourceful case workers. We may remark in passing that she left a position in the English department of a well-known college for women to enter the employ of our society. We hope that a generous public will make it possible to retain her services. She writes:

My time has been taken up with a young poet who seems worth saving and who was sent to us by one of our friendly visitors. He was naturally of a buoyant disposition, but when composing poetry he was plunged into abysmal gloom. When the writing mood was upon him he would fairly revel in the thought of the futility of effort. His emotions were unstable. At one moment he would be in a verbal paroxysm of grief over the thought that things are as they are, and

the next moment he would be in stony despair over the suspicion that they aren't that way at all. Nothing pleased him. The shorter the poem, the worse he seemed to feel. He would start as if he were going to cheer up and say something. Then he would stop in the middle of an unpunctuated sentence as if to say, "What's the use?" Two or three ejaculations on an otherwise empty page produced the effect of frustrated genius. It was the effect he intended to produce. And yet, as I said, he was naturally a cheerful and companionable young man.

I made a thorough investigation and found that he had confined his reading to the verses of other poets who were in the same condition. It was a case of competitive world-weariness.

He was removed from his unfavorable surroundings to a hill farm in Vermont, where he could be under observation and at the same time move about quite freely. The slender volumes which had infected him were taken away. The only book allowed to remain in the house was an old copy of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. For the first few weeks the poet was irritable, and wandered about trying to think of some disagreeable subject to write about. He exercised his ingenuity by giving a sinister twist to any ordinary theme. This he did by attaching dismal adjectives to normally cheerful nouns. He wrote a poem in free verse, entitled "Coal-black Sunshine." I remonstrated with him and told him that sunshine isn't coal-black. It made no difference to him. "That's what most people think," he said. "But I'm not writing for the crowd. This is no Pollyanna stuff."

Then he wrote on "The Jealous Earth Turns Green, or the Recurrent Tragedy of Spring"; "When the Tired Arbutus Trails"; "Why the Gentian Is Blind"; "When the Tainted Well Went Dry." This last theme seemed to have great possibilities. By first lamenting its taintedness, and then lamenting its drying up, he got gloomy thoughts coming and going.

Being in New England, he thought he would write on "The Deserted Farmhouse." But all the farmhouses in the vicinity had been transformed into attractive summer cottages and seemed remarkably cheerful. However, he found melancholy satisfaction in thinking of the city he had left behind, and wrote a drab little piece entitled "The Deserted Flat." He pictured a disillusioned summer boarder sitting under an apple tree and thinking in dry-eyed despair of his deserted flat in the city. He pictured its loneliness and stuffiness on a sweltering

August day. To be sure, nobody was in it to suffer, but it was material for melancholy reflections.

But in the course of a few weeks, separated from his companions, a change came over him. One day he came from the orchard with *Leaves of Grass* in his hands.

"Do you know, I was looking for a title for a new book of poems. I thought that Walt would have something for me. I found it, or thought I found it. Here are the lines:

Ah, poverties, wincings, and sulky retreats,

You degradations, you tussle with passions and appetites.

That sounded good to me. How would this do for a title? 'Poverties, Wincings, and Sulky Retreats.' Perhaps the publishers would want a short title. 'Sulky Retreats.' That's what we sophisticates are in favor of. Or perhaps just 'Wincings.' That would look stunning on the title-page.

"Then I read on and found that Walt didn't look at these things as our set does. After giving a list of the degradations, he seems to think that it's not necessary to wallow around in them. He thinks that we not only ought to get out of them as quickly as possible, but that we can. This is what he says:

Ah, think not you finally triumph, my real self has yet to come forth,

It shall yet march forth, o'ermastering, till all lies beneath me,

It shall stand up the soldier of ultimate victory.

"Then I read on and found that that was what he was driving at all the time. 'Out of the bulk, the morbid, and the shallow,' he says, there comes something that is 'electric, antiseptic.' It's that antiseptic element that our crowd seems to have missed. Listen to this:

Over the mountain-growths, disease and sorrow,

An uncaught bird is ever hovering, hovering,

High in the purer, happier air.

From imperfection's murkiest cloud,

Darts always forth one ray of perfect light.

Oh, the blest eyes, the happy hearts,

That see, that know the guiding thread so fine,

Along the mighty labyrinth.

"The poet, according to Walt, is not the one who is lost in the mighty labyrinth and sits down to bewail his fate. He is the one who has found the thread and is following it. If that is so, it makes quite a

difference. I want to take time to think it out. At any rate, I'm going to scrap 'Wincings' and 'Sulky Retreats.' I'm going to call my next volume 'The Soldier of Ultimate Victory.' Don't you think that's a good title?"

"Yes," I said, "if you can live up to it." Seeing that he was in a more genial mood, I ventured to say: "Now that you've got a new line on Whitman, perhaps you might be more sympathetic with Milton's ideas in regard to the nature of poetry."

I found I had gone too far.

"We've cut out that old Puritan stuff long ago."

"I was only going to recall to your mind Milton's declaration that poetry is 'simple, sensuous, and passionate.'"

"Did he say that poetry ought to be sensual? I didn't suppose he was as advanced as that."

"Milton didn't say sensual," I replied, "he said sensuous. He thought poetry made its appeal through the senses. It's something that you feel and hear and touch and taste and smell. The poet's senses become avenues of joy. He writes about

Such sights as youthful poets dream
On summer eves by haunted stream.

The poet has a power of visualization and has the ability to make us see through his eyes. His words are a sort of incantation. Just look at that bend of the Connecticut where Broad Brook comes in through the meadow. I could see it by myself, I suppose, but I get a great deal more pleasure out of it when I murmur Milton's lines:

Meadows trim with daisies pied,
Shallow brooks and rivers wide;
Towers and battlements it sees
Bosomed high in tufted trees.

There aren't any towers and battlements here, but look at that farmhouse on the top of the hill on the New Hampshire side—"bosomed high in tufted trees." How the youthful poet would have enjoyed seeing that!

"And the poet enjoys not only familiar sights but familiar sounds. He loves to listen

While the plowman near at hand
Whistles o'er the furrowed land,
And the milkmaid singeth blithe
And the mower whets his scythe.

And there are times when the smell of new-mown hay gets into his verse, and it is none the worse for that. Milton, when he was your age, enjoyed these sensations. He treated poetry as if it were a privilege and not an affliction. Don't you think there is something in that?"

"Perhaps so," said the poet hesitatingly, "but in these days we have to be sincere. The public expects it of us."

"Quite so," I said, "but suppose you stay up here till you get rid of the jangle in your nerves. Some fine morning you will wake up and be sincerely glad that you are alive. If you succeed in expressing your sincere gladness in language that is not sophisticated or fantastical, but in words that are simple, sensuous, and healthfully passionate, the public will be glad, too."

"But don't you think if I were as simple as that I might lose my standing among the new poets?"

"Oh," I said, "people won't ask whether you are new or not. They will just recognize you as a poet."

V

"Another epidemic which sweeps through congested literary areas is what may be called pseudo-primitivism. It shows marked periodicity and recurs, with variable virulence, at intervals of thirty years. It is in its nature atavistic, being characterized by a relapse into modes of expression once quite natural, but long since outgrown by the more civilized part of mankind. There is a literature that is genuinely primitive. It expresses primitive passions in a simple and unself-conscious way. There is also a literature which deals with a society that is more or less sophisticated. Each has its own place. But the writer whose mind has not had time to mature tries to be primitive and sophisticated at the same time. When a number of primitivistic sophisticates, or sophisticated primitives, get together and encourage each other in their calculated indiscretions, they become disturbers of the peace.

"Here the experience of our social workers in the slums is of great value. Nowhere can the mental processes of sophisticated primitives be better studied than among the youthful denizens

of the slums. Here is a kind of knowingness that is utterly divorced from wisdom. In the crowded streets the play instinct of boys finds its only expression in dodging policemen and risking life in stealing rides on passing vehicles. The victim of such an environment finds an impish pleasure in the forbidden. Humor degenerates into a crooked wit. There is a shallow sophistication of the streets. The qualities which the street boy admires are agility, hardness, toughness, sharpness, and a vivacious insolence. These are the qualities that stand high in the estimation of the gang.

"When we see literary reputations made by the exhibition of these qualities, we have reason to believe that we are dealing with the gang spirit. A popular literary gangster can go far. He has a scorn for reticence which endears him to his own kind. He would return to Nature, but never in a teachable spirit. He is one more object that Nature must apologize for.

"While coarse natures harden under the pressure of crowds, more sensitive spirits are distracted. This forms a separate problem. This brings us to something that our commission has much at heart—the guarding of our more promising and sensitive literary workers from what Emerson called 'the insanity of towns.' There is a tendency for all industrialists to leave the countryside and flock into the urban centers. This creates social problems. To no class is the lure of the city more perilous than to the man of letters.

"Our commission is making a study of the effects of city life with its various stresses and strains on literary workers. We have begun with a survey of New York City and shall continue our researches in other centers so far as our funds will allow.

"A study of current literature produced by clever writers who have crowded into Manhattan Island impresses us with the contrast to the spirit of Diedrich Knickerbocker when he set out to write the history of New York. Knickerbocker began with the creation of the world and came gradually down

to his own time. His idea was that Manhattan Island was only a part of the universe and could only be understood in relation to it.

"Not so with many of the writers of the present Manhattanese school. To them life in New York seems to be not a normal growth but a series of premature explosions. The fire-crackers have short fuses. There is a sensation of jumpiness. There is rapid motion, but no sense of direction. There are all kinds of noises, all kinds of people, all kinds of events. In order to be up to the minute, one must grab the minute before it becomes antiquated. The person who is content to work while it is called today must look out lest what he calls today may be what his more agile competitors call day before yesterday. One feels as a piece of innocent white paper might feel while being thumped by the keys of the typewriter. The clicks and thumps follow each other rapidly. They probably mean something, but the typist has no time to explain to the paper what it is all about. Perhaps she doesn't know herself. She is taking dictation that is too rapid for her.

"The writers whose work conveys the impression of futile hurry and undue nervous strain are not the interpreters of the great city, but its victims. To see a modern city aright, one must be able to look at it as he looks at a great mountain, or a stormy sea—with a certain detachment. He must not be distracted by its varieties or irritated by its noises or bullied by its threats. His must be the 'harvest of a quiet eye.' If you wish to enjoy the sublimity of Niagara, the best way is to take your stand on the bank. It is a mistake to think that you can get a better impression by going over the falls in a barrel."

At this point the writer of the pamphlet remembered once more his official duty and made an urgent plea for annual membership, with especial emphasis on the virtue of promptitude.

G. LOWES DICKINSON

Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson was born in London in 1862, and educated at the Charterhouse School and King's College, Cambridge.

The most important influence on his thought and writing was his travels, in 1912 and 1913, in the Far East, on an Otto Kahn Fellowship. He had already given evidence, in *A Modern Symposium* (1908), of his ability to analyze the social, political, and economic structure of Western civilization. His observations of life in China, India, and Japan furnished him with new advantages of perspective and comparison from which issued the illuminating contrasts of *Appearances—Notes of Travel, East and West* (1914). The following essay, "A Sacred Mountain," is drawn from this volume. He also published in the same year *An Essay on the Civilization of India, China, and Japan*.

The World War engaged the attention of his clear and sensible mind and brought forth penetrating studies of the War and more especially of the peace: *After the War* (1915), *The European Anarchy* (1916), *The Choice Before Us* (1917), and *War: Its Nature, Cause, and Cure* (1923).

He was a Fellow of King's College up to the time of his death in 1932.

A SACRED MOUNTAIN*

G. LOWES DICKINSON

It was midnight when the train set us down at Tai-an-fu.¹ The moon was full. We passed across fields, through deserted alleys where sleepers lay naked on the ground, under a great gate in a great wall, by halls and pavilions, by shimmering, tree-shadowed spaces, up and down steps, and into a court where cypresses grew. We set up our beds in a veranda, and woke to see leaves against the morning sky. We explored the vast temple and its monuments—iron vessels of the Tang age,² a great tablet of the Sung,³ trees said to date from before the Christian era, stones inscribed with drawings of these by the Emperor Chien Lung, hall after hall, court after court, ruinous, overgrown, and the great crumbling walls and gates and towers. Then in the afternoon we began the ascent of Tai Shan,⁴ the most sacred mountain in China, the most frequented, perhaps, in the world. There, according to tradition, legendary emperors worshiped God. Confucius climbed it six centuries before Christ, and sighed, we are told, to find his native state so small. The great Chin-Shih-Huang was there in the third century B. C. Chien Lung in the eighteenth century covered it with inscriptions. And millions of humble pilgrims for thirty centuries at least have toiled up the steep and narrow way. Steep it is, for it makes no detours, but follows straight up the bed of a stream, and the greater part of the five thousand feet is ascended by stone steps. A great ladder of eighteen flights climbs the last ravine, and to see it from below, sinuously

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¹Tai-an-fu, a city in Shantung Province, China, at the foot of Tai Shan.

²Tang age, the Tang dynasty (618-907), the golden age of Chinese literature.

³the Sung, the Sung dynasty (960-1126), famous for its philosophers.

⁴Tai Shan, a mountain in the Shantung peninsula, 4111 feet in height; the most easterly of the five sacred mountains of China.

mounting the precipitous face to the great arch that leads on to the summit, is enough to daunt the most ardent walker. We at least were glad to be chaired some part of the way. A wonderful way! On the lower slopes it passes from portal to portal, from temple to temple. Meadows shaded with aspen and willow border the stream as it falls from green pool to green pool. Higher up are scattered pines. Else the rocks are bare—bare, but very beautiful, with that significance of form which I have found everywhere in the mountains in China.

To such beauty the Chinese are peculiarly sensitive. All the way up the rocks are carved with inscriptions recording the charm and the sanctity of the place. Some of them were written by emperors; many, especially, by Chien Lung, the great patron of art in the eighteenth century. They are models, one is told, of calligraphy as well as of literary composition. Indeed, according to Chinese standards, they could not be the one without the other. The very names of favorite spots are poems in themselves. One is "the pavilion of the phoenixes"; another "the fountain of the white cranes." A rock is called "the tower of the quickening spirit"; the gate on the summit is "the portal of the clouds." More prosaic, but not less charming, is an inscription on a rock in the plain, "the place of the three smiles," because there some mandarins, meeting to drink and converse, told three peculiarly funny stories. Is not that delightful? It seems so to me. And so peculiarly Chinese!

It was dark before we reached the summit. We put up in the temple that crowns it, dedicated to Yü Huang, the "Jade Emperor" of the Taoists⁶; and his image and those of his attendant deities watched our slumbers. But we did not sleep till we had seen the moon rise, a great orange disk, straight from the plain, and swiftly mount till she made the river, five thousand feet below, a silver streak in the dim gray levels.

Next morning, at sunrise, we saw that, north and east, range after range of lower hills stretched to the horizon, while south

⁶*Taoists*, one of the four chief religious sects of China.

lay the plain, with half a hundred streams gleaming down to the river from the valleys. Full in view was the hill where, more than a thousand years ago, the great Tang poet Li-tai-po retired with five companions to drink and make verses. They are still known to tradition as the "six idlers of the bamboo grove"; and the morning sun, I half thought, still shines upon their symposium. We spent the day on the mountain; and as the hours passed by, more and more it showed itself to be a sacred place. Sacred to what god? No question is harder to answer of any sacred place, for there are as many ideas of the god as there are worshipers. There are temples here to various gods: to the mountain himself; to the Lady of the mountain, Pi-hsia-yüen, who is at once the Venus of Lucretius—"goddess of procreation, gold as the clouds, blue as the sky," one inscription calls her—and the kindly mother who gives children to women and heals the little ones of their ailments; to the Great Bear; to the Green Emperor, who clothes the trees with leaves; to the Cloud-compeller; to many others. And in all this, is there no room for God? It is a poor imagination that would think so. When men worship the mountain, do they worship a rock, or the spirit of the place, or the spirit that has no place? It is the latter, we may be sure, that some men adored, standing at sunrise on this spot. And the Jade Emperor—is he a mere idol? In the temple where we slept were three inscriptions set up by the Emperor Chien Lung. They run as follows:

Without labor, O Lord, Thou bringest forth the greatest things.

Thou ledest Thy company of spirits to guard the whole world.

In the company of Thy spirits Thou art wise as a mighty Lord to achieve great works.

These might be sentences from the Psalms; they are as religious as anything Hebraic. And if it be retorted that the mass of the worshipers on Tai Shan are superstitious, so are, and always have been, the mass of worshipers anywhere. Those who rise to religion in any country are few. India, I suspect, is the great

exception. But I do not know that they are fewer in China than elsewhere. For that form of religion, indeed, which consists in the worship of natural beauty and what lies behind it—for the religion of a Wordsworth—they seem to be preëminently gifted. The cult of this mountain, and of the many others like it in China, the choice of sites for temples and monasteries, the inscriptions, the little pavilions set up where the view is loveliest—all go to prove this. In England we have lovelier hills, perhaps, than any in China. But where is our sacred mountain? Where, in all the country, that charming mythology which once in Greece and Italy, as now in China, was the outward expression of the love of nature?

Great God, I'd rather be

A pagan suckled in a creed outworn;

So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,

Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn.

That passionate cry of a poet born into a naked world would never have been wrung from him had he been born in China.

And that leads me to one closing reflection. When lovers of China—"pro-Chinese," as they are contemptuously called in the East—assert that China is more civilized than the modern West, even the candid Westerner, who is imperfectly acquainted with the facts, is apt to suspect insincere paradox. Perhaps these few notes on Tai Shan may help to make the matter clearer. A people that can so consecrate a place of natural beauty is a people of fine feeling for the essential values of life. That they should also be dirty, disorganized, corrupt, incompetent, even if it were true—and it is far from being true in any unqualified sense—would be irrelevant to this issue. On a foundation of inadequate material prosperity they reared, centuries ago, the superstructure of a great culture. The West, in rebuilding its foundations, has gone far to destroy the superstructure. Western civilization, wherever it penetrates, brings with it water-taps, sewers, and police; but it brings also an ugliness, an insincerity, a vulgarity never before

known to history, unless it be under the Roman Empire. It is terrible to see in China the first wave of this Western flood flinging along the coasts and rivers and railway lines its scrofulous foam of advertisements, of corrugated iron roofs, of vulgar, meaningless architectural forms. In China, as in all old civilizations I have seen, all the building of man harmonizes with and adorns nature. In the West everything now built is a blot. Many men, I know, sincerely think that this destruction of beauty is a small matter, and that only decadent aesthetes would pay any attention to it in a world so much in need of sewers and hospitals. I believe this view to be profoundly mistaken. The ugliness of the West is a symptom of disease of the soul. It implies that the end has been lost sight of in the means. In China the opposite is the case. The end is clear, though the means be inadequate. Consider what the Chinese have done to Tai Shan, and what the West will shortly do, once the stream of Western tourists begins to flow strongly. Where the Chinese have constructed a winding stairway of stone, beautiful from all points of view, Europeans or Americans will run up a funicular railway, a staring scar that will never heal. Where the Chinese have written poems in exquisite calligraphy, they will cover the rocks with advertisements. Where the Chinese have built a series of temples, each so designed and placed as to be a new beauty in the landscape, they will run up restaurants and hotels like so many scabs on the face of nature. I say with confidence that they will, because they have done it wherever there is any chance of a paying investment. Well, the Chinese need, I agree, our science, our organization, our medicine. But is it affectation to think they may have to pay too high a price for it, and to suggest that in acquiring our material advantages they may lose what we have gone near to lose, that fine and sensitive culture which is one of the forms of spiritual life? The West talks of civilizing China. Would that China could civilize the West!

JOHN GALSWORTHY

John Galsworthy, novelist, dramatist, and essayist, was born at Coombe, Surrey, England, in 1867, of a family which can trace its line for centuries in the history of Devonshire. He attended Harrow and New College, Oxford, and took an honor degree in law. In 1890 he was admitted to the bar, but he soon dropped the practice of law to embark on extensive travels in Russia, New Zealand, the Fiji Islands, Australia, South Africa, Canada, and other far regions. On the voyage between Adelaide and Capetown, in 1894, he made the acquaintance of a Polish sailor named Joseph Conrad, who showed him the unpublished manuscript of his first novel. Ten years later the sailor, turned novelist, dedicated *Nostromo* to John Galsworthy.

After two years Mr. Galsworthy returned to England to devote himself to writing. Fame came to him but slowly. His first undoubted success was *The Man of Property* (1906), destined to be the first part of the great novel-cycle of "a possessive world," *The Forsyte Saga* (1922). In 1906, also, he produced his first play, *The Silver Box*, followed by *Strife* (1909), *Justice* (1910), *The Pigeon* (1912), *The Skin Game* (1920), *Loyalties* (1922), and others. His essays are gathered in the following volumes: *A Commentary* (1908), *A Motley* (1910), *The Inn of Tranquillity* (1912), *A Sheaf, Volume I* (1916), *Volume II* (1919).

He died in 1933.

Whether he was writing novel, play, or essay, Mr. Galsworthy was always, primarily, the propagandist. With a spirit intensely alive to the injustices of the social order, he was ever ready to fight the cause of the Outs against the Ins. And yet, as though aware of the pitfalls in espousing the forlorn cause, he used a style which is cool, restrained, sober. There must be nothing maudlin about his appeal. He was too honest a lawyer to rest his case on anything but hard fact.

"It is the style," wrote Conrad, "of a man whose sympathy with mankind is too genuine to allow him the smallest gratification of his vanity at the cost of his fellow creatures . . . sufficiently pointed to carry deep his remorseless irony and grave enough to be the dignified vehicle of his profound compassion . . . Before all it is a style well under control, and therefore it never betrays this tender and ironic writer into an odious cynicism of laughter and tears."

The skill with which Mr. Galsworthy walked the perilously narrow path between sentiment and sentimentality is nowhere better illustrated than in his essay "Quality."

QUALITY*

JOHN GALSWORTHY

I knew him from the days of my extreme youth, because he made my father's boots; inhabiting with his elder brother two little shops let into one, in a small by-street—now no more, but then most fashionably placed in the West End.

That tenement had a certain quiet distinction; there was no sign upon its face that he made for any of the Royal Family—merely his own German name of Gessler Brothers; and in the window a few pairs of boots. I remember that it always troubled me to account for those unvarying boots in the window, for he made only what was ordered, reaching nothing down, and it seemed so inconceivable that what he made could ever have failed to fit. Had he bought them to put there? That, too, seemed inconceivable. He would never have tolerated in his house leather on which he had not worked himself. Besides, they were too beautiful—the pair of pumps, so inexpressibly slim, the patent leathers with cloth tops, making water come into one's mouth, the tall brown riding-boots with marvelous sooty glow, as if, though new, they had been worn a hundred years. Those pairs could only have been made by one who saw before him the Soul of Boot—so truly were they prototypes incarnating the very spirit of all footgear. These thoughts, of course, came to me later, though even when I was promoted to him, at the age of perhaps fourteen, some inkling haunted me of the dignity of himself and brother. For to make boots—such boots as he made—seemed to me then, and still seems to me, mysterious and wonderful.

I remember well my shy remark, one day, while stretching out to him my youthful foot:

*From *The Inn of Tranquillity; Studies and Essays*. Copyright, 1912, by Charles Scribner's Sons. Reprinted by permission of the author and the publishers.

"Isn't it awfully hard to do, Mr. Gessler?"

And his answer, given with a sudden smile from out of the sardonic redness of his beard: "Id is an Ardt!"

Himself, he was a little as if made from leather, with his yellow crinkly face, and crinkly reddish hair and beard, and neat folds slanting down his cheeks to the corners of his mouth, and his guttural and one-toned voice; for leather is a sardonic substance, and stiff and slow of purpose. And that was the character of his face, save that his eyes, which were gray-blue, had in them the simple gravity of one secretly possessed by the Ideal. His elder brother was so very like him—though watery, paler in every way, with a great industry—that sometimes in early days I was not quite sure of him until the interview was over. Then I knew that it was he, if the words, "I will ask my brudder," had not been spoken; and, that, if they had, it was his elder brother.

When one grew old and wild and ran up bills, one somehow never ran them up with Gessler Brothers. It would not have seemed becoming to go in there and stretch out one's foot to that blue iron-spectacled glance, owing him for more than—say—two pairs, just the comfortable reassurance that one was still his client.

For it was not possible to go to him very often—his boots lasted terribly, having something beyond the temporary—some, as it were, essence of boot stitched into them.

One went in, not as into most shops, in the mood of: "Please serve me, and let me go!" but restfully, as one enters a church; and, sitting on the single wooden chair, waited—for there was never anybody there. Soon, over the top edge of that sort of well—rather dark, smelling soothingly of leather—which formed the shop, there would be seen his face, or that of his elder brother, peering down. A guttural sound, and the tip-tap of bast slippers beating the narrow wooden stairs, and he would stand before one without coat, a little bent, in leather apron, with sleeves turned back, blinking—as if awakened from some

dream of boots, or like an owl surprised in daylight and annoyed at this interruption.

And I would say: "How do you do, Mr. Gessler? Could you make me a pair of Russia leather boots?"

Without a word he would leave me, retiring whence he came, or into the other portion of the shop, and I would continue to rest in the wooden chair, inhaling the incense of his trade. Soon he would come back, holding in his thin, veined hand a piece of gold-brown leather. With eyes fixed on it, he would remark: "What a beaudiful biecel!" When I, too, had admired it, he would speak again. "When do you wand dem?" And I would answer: "Oh! As soon as you conveniently can." And he would say: "Tomorrow fordnight?" Or if he were his elder brother: "I will ask my brudder!"

Then I would murmur: "Thank you! Good-morning, Mr. Gessler." "Goot-morning!" he would reply, still looking at the leather in his hand. And as I moved to the door, I would hear the tip-tap of his bast slippers restoring him, up the stairs, to his dream of boots. But if it were some new kind of footgear that he had not yet made me, then indeed he would observe ceremony—divesting me of my boot and holding it long in his hand, looking at it with eyes at once critical and loving, as if recalling the glow with which he had created it, and rebuking the way in which one had disorganized this masterpiece. Then, placing my foot on a piece of paper, he would two or three times tickle the outer edges with a pencil and pass his nervous fingers over my toes, feeling himself into the heart of my requirements.

I cannot forget that day on which I had occasion to say to him: "Mr. Gessler, that last pair of town walking-boots creaked, you know."

He looked at me for a time without replying, as if expecting me to withdraw or qualify the statement, then said:

"Id shouldn'd 'ave greaked."

"It did, I'm afraid."

"You goddem wed before dey found demselves?"

"I don't think so."

At that he lowered his eyes, as if hunting for memory of those boots, and I felt sorry I had mentioned this grave thing.

"Zend dem back!" he said; "I will look at dem."

A feeling of compassion for my creaking boots surged up in me, so well could I imagine the sorrowful long curiosity of regard which he would bend on them.

"Zome boods," he said slowly, "are bad from birdt. If I can do noding wid dem, I dake dem off your bill."

Once (once only) I went absent-mindedly into his shop in a pair of boots bought in an emergency at some large firm's. He took my order without showing me any leather, and I could feel his eyes penetrating the inferior integument of my foot. At last he said:

"Dose are nod my boods."

The tone was not one of anger, nor of sorrow, not even of contempt, but there was in it something quiet that froze the blood. He put his hand down and pressed a finger on the place where the left boot, endeavoring to be fashionable, was not quite comfortable.

"Id 'urds you dere," he said. "Dose big virms 'ave no self-respect. Drash!" And then, as if something had given way within him, he spoke long and bitterly. It was the only time I ever heard him discuss the conditions and hardships of his trade.

"Dey get id all," he said, "dey get id by adverdisement, nod by work. Dey dake id away from us, who lofe our boods. Id gomes to this—bresently I haf no work. Every year id gets less—you will see." And looking at his lined face I saw things I had never noticed before, bitter things and bitter struggle—and what a lot of gray hairs there seemed suddenly in his red beard!

As best I could, I explained the circumstances of the purchase of those ill-omened boots. But his face and voice made so deep impression that during the next few minutes I ordered many

pairs. Nemesis fell! They lasted more terribly than ever. And I was not able conscientiously to go to him for nearly two years.

When at last I went I was surprised to find that outside one of the two little windows of his shop another name was painted, also that of a bootmaker—making, of course, for the Royal Family. The old familiar boots, no longer in dignified isolation, were huddled in the single window. Inside, the now contracted well of the one little shop was more scented and darker than ever. And it was longer than usual, too, before a face peered down, and the tip-tap of the bast slippers began. At last he stood before me, and, gazing through those rusty iron spectacles, said:

“Mr. —, isn’d it?”

“Ah! Mr. Gessler,” I stammered, “but your boots are really *too* good, you know! See, these are quite decent still!” And I stretched out to him my foot. He looked at it.

“Yes,” he said; “beople do not wand good boods, id seems.”

To get away from his reproachful eyes and voice I hastily remarked: “What have you done to your shop?”

He answered quietly: “Id was too exbensif. Do you wand some boods?”

I ordered three pairs, though I had only wanted two, and quickly left. I had, I do not know quite what feeling of being part, in his mind, of a conspiracy against him; or not perhaps so much against him as against his idea of boot. One does not, I suppose, care to feel like that; for it was again many months before my next visit to his shop, paid, I remember, with the feeling: “Oh! well, I can’t leave the old boy—so here goes! Perhaps it’ll be his elder brother!”

For his elder brother, I knew, had not character enough to reproach me, even dumbly.

And, to my relief, in the shop there did appear to be his elder brother, handling a piece of leather.

“Well, Mr. Gessler,” I said, “how are you?”

He came close, and peered at me.

"I am breddy well," he said slowly; "but my elder brudder is dead."

And I saw that it was indeed himself—but how aged and wan! And never before had I heard him mention his brother. Much shocked, I murmured: "Oh! I am sorry."

"Yes," he answered, "he was a good man, he made a good bood; but he is dead." And he touched the top of his head, where the hair had suddenly gone as thin as it had been on that of his poor brother, to indicate, I suppose, the cause of death. "He could nod ged over losing de oder shop. Do you wand any boods?" And he held up the leather in his hand. "Id's a beaudiful biece."

I ordered several pairs. It was very long before they came—but they were better than ever. One simply could not wear them out. And soon after that I went abroad.

It was over a year before I was again in London. And the first shop I went to was my old friend's. I had left a man of sixty, I came back to one of seventy-five, pinched and worn and tremulous, who genuinely, this time, did not at first know me.

"Oh! Mr. Gessler," I said, sick at heart; "how splendid your boots are! See, I've been wearing this pair nearly all the time I've been abroad; and they're not half worn out, are they?"

He looked long at my boots—a pair of Russia leather, and his face seemed to regain steadiness. Putting his hand on my instep, he said:

"Do dey vid you here? I 'ad drouble wid dat bair, I remember."

I assured him that they had fitted beautifully.

"Do you wand any boods?" he said. "I can make dem quickly; id is a slack dime."

I answered: "Please, please! I want boots all round—every kind!"

"I will make a vresh model. Your food must be bigger." And with utter slowness, he traced round my foot, and felt my toes, only once looking up to say:

"Did I dell you my brudder was dead?"

To watch him was painful, so feeble had he grown; I was glad to get away.

I had given those boots up, when one evening they came. Opening the parcel, I set the four pairs out in a row. Then one by one I tried them on. There was no doubt about it. In shape and fit, in finish and quality of leather, they were the best he had ever made me. And in the mouth of one of the town walking-boots I found his bill. The amount was the same as usual, but it gave me quite a shock. He had never sent it in till quarter day. I flew downstairs, and wrote a check, and posted it at once with my own hand. A week later, passing the little street, I thought I would go in and tell him how splendidly the new boots fitted. But when I came to where his shop had been, his name was gone. Still there, in the window, were the slim pumps, the patent leathers with cloth tops, the sooty riding-boots.

I went in, very much disturbed. In the two little shops—again made into one—was a young man with an English face.

"Mr. Gessler in?" I said.

He gave me a strange, ingratiating look.

"No, sir," he said, "no. But we can attend to anything with pleasure. We've taken the shop over. You've seen our name, no doubt, next door. We make for some very good people."

"Yes, yes," I said; "but Mr. Gessler?"

"Oh!" he answered; "dead."

"Dead! But I only received these boots from him last Wednesday week."

"Ah!" he said; "a shockin' go. Poor old man starved 'imself."

"Good God!"

"Slow starvation, the doctor called it! You see he went to work in such a way! Would keep the shop on; wouldn't have a soul touch his boots except himself. When he got an order,

it took him such a time. People won't wait. He lost everybody. And there he'd sit, goin' on and on—I will say that for him—not a man in London made a better boot! But look at the competition! He never advertised! Would 'ave the best leather, too, and do it all 'imself. Well, there it is. What could you expect with his ideas?"

"But starvation—!"

"That may be a bit flowery, as the sayin' is—but I know myself he was sittin' over his boots day and night, to the very last. You see I used to watch 'im. Never gave 'imself time to eat; never had a penny in the house. All went in rent and leather. How he lived so long I don't know. He regular let his fire go out. He was a character. But he made good boots."

"Yes," I said, "he made good boots."

And I turned and went out quickly, for I did not want that youth to know that I could hardly see.

STEPHEN GWYNN

Stephen (Lucius) Gwynn was born in Ireland in 1864, the son of an Episcopal clergyman. Although his father and brothers all distinguished themselves in Trinity College, Dublin, he was sent to Oxford, after preparation at St. Columba's College, Rathfarnham. After graduation from Brasenose College, Oxford, he taught the classics in various places, doing a little writing at the same time. In 1896 he went to London and settled down to a definitely literary career, serving first an apprenticeship in journalism.

He left London in 1904 to live in the land of his birth; sometimes it is said that he returned to Ireland with the attitude of the sentimental tourist. Most of his books have to do with Ireland: its people, its economic conditions, its politics, its literature, its history. He has written many books descriptive of travel in Ireland, a novel, *The Old Knowledge* (1901), whose scenes are laid in Donegal, and short stories and verse about Irish subjects. "A Sunday in Donegal," reprinted here from a volume of essays, *For Second Reading* (1918), is typical of his treatment of the Irish scene.

As a mild Nationalist, he was a Member of Parliament from 1906 to 1918; enlisted as a private during the War and rose to a captaincy; and was a member of the Irish Convention of 1917-1918.

A SUNDAY IN DONEGAL*¹

STEPHEN GWYNN

We were late arriving at the old chapel, and the first thing that met us was the sight—less familiar, perhaps, in any other country than in Ireland—of worshipers kneeling outside the open door, unable to find room within. As we passed behind them, we could see the priest in his robes administering the Communion; his figure was silhouetted against daylight, for the door in the south transept also was open, and beyond it the kneeling congregation overflowed on that side, also, under the sky. Between the priest and us was the huddled mass of women, who sat apart from the men. There was scarcely a hat among them. Shawls and handkerchiefs—red, orange, blue, purple, buff, and brown of every conceivable hue—made such a glow of rich and harmonious color as you will only see in an Irish-speaking district, where the people still dress in a manner that visibly proclaims their nationality. A friend recognized me and led us up into the gallery facing the chancel—there were three galleries, and all packed as closely as the seats on the floor. From here we could see the men, not wholly so distinctive in their dress as the women, yet for the most part clad in the rough home-spun, undyed, home-woven frieze. Look where you might, your eyes told you that you were in Ireland; and I have never been in any other congregation anywhere which seemed to offer such attractions to a painter. What the European countries generally sacrifice by choosing to wear far-off imitations of what is worn in London and Paris cannot be counted.

But it was not the eye only that was affected by this evidence of national distinctness. If there be elsewhere congregations so rapt, I have not seen them. For a moment we

*From *For Second Reading, Attempts to Please*. Maunsell and Company, Ltd., 1918. Reprinted by permission of the author.

¹*Donegal*, a county in Ulster, Ireland, on the extreme northern and western coasts.

felt shame at our intrusion, but the fear of having disturbed worship soon passed off; it seemed as if an earthquake would hardly have broken the spell of that devotion. When the long succession of communicants was done with, the priest read the prayers after Mass, not in Latin nor in English, but in the Irish tongue of those he spoke to. Donegal-bred, he had the accent, at least to my unskilled ear; but he was no native speaker, and when he preached it was in English. All that was needed was the tongue of the people to round off the impression of that discourse. As the young priest stood on the altar-steps, and the old men in their frieze stood by him, touching the very rail, it seemed not so much a religious office as some tribe council where debate was held on matters homely, yet weighty with significance. The Protestant Church, for all its bareness of ritual, has come far away from that primitive simplicity.

Another thing struck me then as never before, for all I have traveled about Ireland—the strength and the constant maintenance, through the church, of the local bond. As the priest disrobed before the sermon, he gave out subjects for prayer: “You will say now a Pater Noster in Irish for all out of this parish who are in America,” “a Pater Noster and two Hail Marys for those who are in England or Scotland” (that parish is a great home of emigrant labor), “a Pater Noster and three Hail Marys in Irish for the dead that are in this churchyard.” And the heavy rustle of the whispered prayer would go through the crowded transepts like the noise of leaves on a summer evening—bringing the dead and the far-away very near, it seemed, to those who then called them into memory. Never at any time in Ireland have I felt so remote from England, Scotland, and all the world as there at that Catholic service—so world-wide, yet so homely.

Outside the church door, when benediction ended and no one was left in the building but the schoolmaster teaching children their catechism in Irish, a ritual more distinctive still was enacted. Perhaps fifty out of that immense congregation

made their way into the churchyard, and stood for the most part chatting in a group around the monument to a departed priest. But a few women there detached themselves from the rest, and, each of them picking her way through the grass to a gravestone or the little cross that marked a tomb still simpler, knelt down, and, bending forward, pressed her face close to the ground. Then—from the very earth it seemed—there rose a faint crying, hardly louder at first than a cricket's noise—swelling, dying down, swelling again, yet always so faint that out there in the open it was hardly audible ten yards off, unless one strained to hear it. But then a woman raised the chant from a grave just beside us; and, as one listened to her cry near at hand, and the other faint wailings, all chanted to the same heartrending little tune, they seemed to fill all earth and heaven. It was like the cry, not of this or that wife or mother, but of the land itself—a voice issuing here from among the graves—the wailing of Ireland after her scattered sons. I have heard the keen before from many voices raised together at a funeral, but never elsewhere have I met this weekly renewing of the wail, this melancholy mingling of separate keenings, each mourning its own loss—and it would break your heart to listen to it.

Away from the church was a very different gathering around the post office, where men and women crowded and jostled as the postmaster read out names. Well they might look to the post, with the four or five hundred of their men away at the harvesting. It was all a part of the weekly reunion, when these mountaineers and fisher folk gathered from many miles around have sight and speech of one another. The week centers around Sunday. The church is the meeting-point of life for a whole countryside; and I think the rest of us, not Catholics, who care for Ireland, when we are brought face to face with the Catholic Church at such times and in such places, must feel toward it almost as if it were our own, because it is so deeply interwoven with all the life that is most Irish in Ireland.

ROBERT HILLYER

Robert (Silliman) Hillyer, poet and critical essayist, now teaching English at Harvard University, was born in East Orange, New Jersey, in 1895, a member of a Connecticut family founded by John Hillyer in 1630. His boyhood and school years in the valley of the Housatonic River made him reluctant, according to his own testimony, "ever to enter a city or to leave Connecticut," and he is proud of the fact that he is a provincial at heart. He has, however, traveled abroad and lived in Denmark and France, spending a year of special study in Copenhagen as a fellow of the American-Scandinavian Foundation after his graduation from Harvard in 1917.

His works in book form are confined to poetry: *Sonnets and Other Lyrics* (1917), *The Hills Give Promise* (1923), *The Halt in the Garden* (1925), *The Seventh Hill* (1928), and other volumes. His critical essays, at once substantial and salty, have been published in the pages of periodicals. The following illuminating and sympathetic study of the poetry of Emily Dickinson appeared in *The Freeman* of fragrant memory.

EMILY DICKINSON*

ROBERT HILLYER

"If fame belonged to me, I would not escape her; if she did not, the longest day would pass me on the chase, and the approbation of my dog would forsake me then. My barefoot rank is better." Fame? It is doubtful that Emily Dickinson will ever be famous. She is not the sort of poet to be drummed and trumpeted to the people, nor yet the sort to be respectably dissected in the college classroom. She has been fortunate enough to escape all categories, popular and scholastic:

I'm nobody! Who are you?
Are you nobody, too?
Then there's a pair of us—don't tell!
They'd banish us, you know.

How dreary to be somebody!
How public, like a frog
To tell your name the livelong day
To an admiring bog!

It would be incongruous to read her aloud to a large group, however sympathetic. All the pompous absurdity of election to any Hall of Fame would have convulsed her with laughter, unless directed at herself—in which case she would have fled, panic-stricken. Yet year by year knowledge of the secret spreads, as friend whispers to friend and confides the inimitable poet to a new lover. Her first admirers feel somewhat ashamed of the patronizing or apologetic tone they once adopted toward her writing, and speak in bolder phrases. "Quaint," "whimsical," "obscure," "eccentric"—these words no longer encom-

*From *The Freeman*, October 18, 1922. Reprinted by permission of the author and the publishers. The poems included are copyrighted by Little, Brown and Company and are reprinted by permission.

pass an appraisal of her work, and the lazy-minded who once applied them to her have now either given her up altogether or have been piqued by a second reading to closer attention.

Eccentric is the most difficult characterization to dispel, and, of course, the most unjust. The highest sanity, imagination, is so consistently ignored by exponents of the "normal" that the imaginative or contemplative life must always seem to them warped and unnatural. What relation to reality had this New England spinster, who year by year retreated farther from the world, until she could boast to a correspondent, "I do not cross my father's ground to any house or town"? Her own answer is sufficient: "Of shunning men and women—they talk of hallowed things, aloud, and embarrass my dog." For every apparent eccentricity of life or style she presents the sane, the final explanation. Reclusiveness in her case was no ignominious flight from the world; it was rather a safe perspective from which she could look around and choose her intimates.

The soul selects her own society,
Then shuts the door;
On her divine majority
Obtrude no more . . .

I've known her from an ample nation
Choose one;
Then close the valves of her attention
Like stone.

For a variety of reasons, Emily Dickinson's scope has been sadly underestimated. Her brevity has been mistaken for smallness, her love of detail for mere whimsy. Certainly she followed Blake's injunction:

To see a world in a grain of sand,
And heaven in a wild flower;

Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
And eternity in an hour.

Her expression is so succinct and plausible that she often completes her statement before a sluggish-minded reader has grasped her phraseology. Her poems rarely exceed a dozen lines; they are epigrammatic and packed. The neatness of her expression is baffling to those who look for the usual padding that gives a reader time to catch up with the poet's meaning. There are no "thank-you-ma'ams" on Emily Dickinson's road; her pace is full speed, and uphill at that. But her itinerary follows a road; she makes no sudden jumps into cosmos. Always she begins her voyage in a familiar New England countryside, and, if she lead you into the realm of Immortality, that, too, is New England countryside, where the only strangeness is the absence of Death.

Eden is that old-fashioned House
We dwell in every day,
Without suspecting our abode
Until we drive away.
How fair, on looking back, the Day
We sauntered from the door,
Unconscious our returning
Discover it no more.

Yet her mystical second-sight has in no way diminished her careful observation of external details. The New England countryside of her poems is exact as well as transfigured. Every changing aspect is noted with exquisite rapture, and every seasonable stir becomes miraculous before her eyes. She was no recluse who could look out of her window and see illimitable fields and hills stretching away beyond the horizon of death. It is only occasionally that we find her pausing perplexedly before that horizon. Finality, mortal defeat, is a rare theme with her:

This quiet Dust was Gentlemen and Ladies,
And Lads and Girls;
Was laughter and ability and sighing,
And frocks and curls.
This passive place a Summer's nimble mansion,
Where Bloom and Bees
Fulfilled their Oriental Circuit,
Then ceased like these.

More often she looks beyond her mortal landscape with a strangely solemn gayety; her gaze is never directed toward death, but through death, with a sort of tiptoe expectancy of the best:

The overtakelessness of those
Who have accomplished Death
Majestic is to me beyond
The majesties of Earth.

The soul her "not at Home"
Inscribes upon the flesh,
And takes her fair aërial gait
Beyond the hope of touch.

The immortality toward which Emily Dickinson turns so decisively is no mystical merging of the many into the One—that subterfuge of the weak-spirited. Identity is the greatest boon, its preservation the soul's fiercest function. It is the "Single Hound" which attends the soul through the immense adventure of Life. Moreover, she distrusted abstractions, and saw eternity, as she saw the world which lay around her, in terms of things and individuals.

This revolt against abstract ideas of God and Heaven led her, and probably others, to believe that she was not religious. Any conception of Paradise apart from the Oriental Circuit of well-loved vistas was impossible to her; an absentee God

was beyond the acceptance of her healthy imagination. Speaking of her family, she writes: "They are all religious, except me, and address an eclipse, every morning, whom they call their 'Father.'" All the emphasis she could bring to bear stressed the Heaven that lies about us, the God who walks in gardens in the cool of the evening, the immortality that perfects the delights of earth. She could not preoccupy herself with churchliness as she saw it round her; one passing glimpse of scorn or of pity, and she was off to the fields again. "There is what is called an 'awakening' in the church, and I know of no choicer ecstasy than to see Mrs. — roll out in crêpe every morning, I suppose to intimidate the Antichrist; at least it would have that effect on me. . . . Spring is a happiness so beautiful, so unique, so unexpected, that I don't know what to do with my heart. I dare not take it, I dare not leave it—what do you advise?"

Every Sabbath morning, the rest of the Dickinson family went piously to church; Emily stayed at home with her robins and her flowers, because, she explained, it was the more economical method, as it saved going to Heaven.

Some keep the Sabbath going to church;
I keep it staying at home,
With a bobolink for a chorister,
And an orchard for a dome . . .

God preaches, a noted clergyman,
And the sermon is never long;
So instead of getting to Heaven at last,
I'm going all along!

Another element that cut her off from the orthodoxy of her day was a total ignorance of evil. Sorrow she knew—not, generally, as an intruder, rather as a background to her serene joy; but evil was nonexistent as far as she was concerned. The

grim strife against the ghostly foe, so picturesque a part of New England belief even as late as her time, was inexplicable to her. "When much in the woods, as a little girl, I was told that the snake would bite me, that I might pick a poisonous flower, or goblins kidnap me; but I went along and met no one but angels, who were far shyer of me than I could be of them—so I haven't that confidence in fraud which many exercise." Her letters during the Civil War reflect no burning enthusiasm for any abstract cause, but merely a tender admiration for friends of hers who gave their lives—individual heroes individually loved and mourned. For the war itself she has just one comment: "War feels to me an oblique place." This was neither blindness nor heartlessness, but an unworldly innocence which could not comprehend the survival of monsters on an Elysian earth. "We read in a tremendous book about 'an enemy' and armed a confidential fort to scatter him away. The time has passed, and years have come, and yet not any 'Satan.' I think he must be making war upon some other nation."

All these utterances of hers, whether of slightest or profoundest import, are fraught with a whimsicality of expression that some have called deliberate, even perverse. I cannot believe it. Emily Dickinson paradoxically achieves the highest art by the artlessness of her method; consciously, she neither revolts nor conforms. Many of her phrases that seem conscious are short cuts to significance, such as "the soul her 'not at Home' inscribes upon the flesh"; others are natural outbursts of a delightfully naughty humor with which she sometimes tempered satire and sometimes incongruously mingled high seriousness. She was loyal to the child-hearted of the world, and children themselves were her most desired comrades. "Blessed are they that play, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." The industrious and disapproving were objects of scorn to be avoided when possible, and reviled when necessary.

The butterfly obtains
But little sympathy,
Though favorably mentioned
In Entomology.
Because he travels freely
And wears a proper coat,
The circumspect are certain
That he is dissolute . . .

Nor is she afraid to carry playfulness to the very gates of Heaven. Why not? Heaven is just outside the back door, and God is a jolly, fatherly person whom to address familiarly, even flippantly, is the privilege of one who walks with him day by day. There is a saucy appreciation, but no impertinence, in her commending him for the orderliness of his routine:

Lightly stepped a yellow star
To its lofty place,
Loosed the Moon her silver hat
From her lustral face.
All of evening softly lit
As an astral hall—
“Father,” I observed to Heaven,
“You are punctual.”

If she invoke her Father's attention to the rat, she is simply taking him at his word concerning his care of all his creatures:

Papa above! Regard a Mouse
O'erpowered by the Cat;
Reserve within thy kingdom
A “Mansion” for the Rat!

Snug in seraphic cupboards
To nibble all the day,
While unsuspecting cycles
Wheel pompously away.

Who, in the presence of these amazing poems, would wish a single twisted syllable straightened to insure the comprehension of mediocre minds or the applause of pedants?

It is a strange combination of delights that Emily Dickinson has left to us, so direct as to seem obscure, so loving as to seem brusque, so simple as to seem eccentric. Living amid the velvet hush of American Victorianism, she blew clarion notes of the shocking truth; a daughter of Puritanism, she pushed past the rigid image of Fear and took her God confidently by the hand. The vast love that was her being was never squandered in such sentimental abstractions as Humanity, Nature, and Religion; it was profitably, if wantonly, poured out for the individuals and objects that she knew, her family, her friends, the hired man, all children, her garden, and the visible symbols of life everlasting. Pomposity and show were known to her only as absurdities to be shunned; and always, in every word she wrote, we find that excellent sense of proportion, too significant to be called a sense of humor, which gave to her most solemn statements an unvarying charm.

As I look out of my window over the drowsy New England landscape, I catalogue the myriad details of beauty that I see, wondering if any of them escaped her gleeful comment. Not one; they are all in the fields outside; they are all in the book under my hand; and in both is the mystery of recurring life, the happy sense of everyday reality made eternal through love. It is something to have been the laureate of an entire countryside. Beauty is not always clearly articulate, and even these happy fields would be less familiar had she not interpreted their speech.

But was she a great poet? The question startles us back into technicalities. I cannot rely on the word poet; it has suffered sad changes; I am not sure I should like to call anyone I respect a poet any more. Something strange has come over the word; it is half-blighted like the sun in partial eclipse. She certainly discovered a magic idiom of her own, which is

hers only and can never be imitated. She interpreted New England and Eternity—but both these lands have fallen in favor. Perhaps I had best turn to her own criterion of poetry as she expressed it to Colonel Higginson, who called it a “crowning extravaganza”: “If I read a book and it makes my whole body so cold no fire can ever warm me, I know that is poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry. These are the only ways I know it. Is there any other way?” One other way, at least, Emily Dickinson; and I am not sure I can define it. I hear much talk about the Greatest American Poet, with Poe and Whitman in the foreground. I read them both; I admire one of them. But there is only one American writer who, I am certain, can never, in any place, or in any manner, be subjected to comparison; and perhaps that is another way of knowing poetry.

W. H. HUDSON

William Henry Hudson's life affords few facts for the biographer. Born on the pampas of La Plata, Argentina, about 1841, of American parents, he spent his early life far from European civilization. He grew up amid the wild ranch life of the mixed Indian and Spanish population, occasionally visiting Buenos Aires, but largely living the life of nature. He was educated by tutors, but developed for himself the marvelous gifts of observation which made him a great naturalist. He was never a scientist and had no love for musty museums and the research of the laboratory; but he knew wild life at first hand, both in South America and later in England. The story of his early life is told in his autobiography, *Far Away and Long Ago* (1918), the re-creation of an extraordinarily retentive memory.

His youth and middle life were marked by continuous ill health and extreme poverty. After his removal to England he lived in retirement, neglected by the public and probably indifferent to that neglect. His first book was published in 1885, after which some two dozen volumes came from his pen. Many of these are books of nature studies. Several are novels: *The Purple Land* (1885), *Green Mansions* (1904), *A Crystal Age* (1906). Others are collections of short stories or sketches: *Hampshire Days* (1903), *The Land's End* (1908), *A Shepherd's Life* (1910). A tendency to the fantastic, shown at its most extravagant in *Green Mansions*, is illustrated by *A Little Boy Lost* (1905).

"Hudson's chief title to a posthumous fame," wrote H. J. Massingham, at the time of Hudson's death, "will rest upon his capacity to express, in a prose as pellucid as his perception of natural life was clairvoyant, certain powers of mediation and reconciliation, and yet leave an impression of wholeness and continuity." For in him were united, as Massingham explained, the poet and the naturalist; in his writings he reconciled personal experience with objective observation, art with humanitarianism, fact with romance. His limpid and effortless prose is the despair of critics. "He writes English," wrote Joseph Conrad, "as the good God maketh grass: it is there; and no one knows whence or how it came."

Hudson died in 1922, only a few years after the arrival of fame had relieved him of the grip of poverty.

PILGRIMS AT THE LAND'S END*¹

W. H. HUDSON

There were days at the headland when I observed a goodish number of elderly men among the pilgrims, some very old, and this at first surprised me, but by and by it began to seem only natural. I was particularly impressed one day at noon in early spring in clear but cold weather with a biting north-east wind, when I found six or seven aged men sitting about on the rocks that lie scattered over the green slope behind the famous promontory. They were too old or too feeble to venture down on the rough headland; their companions had strayed away, some to the fishing cove, others along the higher cliffs, and left them there to rest. They were in greatcoats with scarves and comforters round their necks, and hats or caps drawn well down; and they sat mostly in dejected attitudes, bending forward, their hands resting on the handles of their sticks, some with their chins on their hands, but all gazed in one direction over the cold gray sea. Strangers to each other, unlike in life and character, coming from widely-separated places, some probably from countries beyond the ocean, yet all here, silently gazing in one direction beyond that rocky foreland, with the same look of infinite weariness on their gray faces and in their dim, sad eyes, as if one thought and feeling and motive had drawn them to this spot. Can it be that the sentiment or fancy which is sown in our minds in childhood and lies asleep and forgotten in us through most of our years, revives and acquires toward the end a new and strange significance when we have entered upon our second childhood?

*From *A Hudson Anthology*. J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

¹*Land's End*, a cape in Cornwall, the most westerly point in England.

The period, I mean, when we recover our ancient mental possessions—the heirlooms which cannot be alienated or lost, which have descended to us from our remotest progenitors through centuries and thousands of years. These old men cannot see the objects which appear to younger eyes—the distant passing ships, and the land—that dim, broken line, as of a low cloud on the horizon, of the islands; their sight is altered from what it was, yet is, perhaps, now able to discern things invisible to us—other islands, uncharted, not the *Cassiterides*.²

What are they, these other islands, and what do we know of them? Nothing at all; indeed, nothing can be known to the generality; only these life-weary ancients, sitting on rocks and gazing at vacancy, might enlighten us if they would. Undoubtedly there are differences of sight among them which would make their descriptions vary, but they would probably all agree in affirming that the scene before them has no resemblance to the earlier vision. This gray-faced old man with his chin on his hands, who looks as if he had not smiled these many years, would perhaps smile now if he were to recall that former vision, which came by teaching and served well enough during his hot youth and strenuous middle age. He does not see before him a beautiful blessed land bright with fadeless flowers, nor a great multitude of people in shining garments and garlands who will come down to the shore to welcome him with sounds of shouting and singing and playing on instruments of divers forms, and who will lead him in triumph to the gardens of everlasting delight and to mansions of crystal with emerald and amethyst colonnades and opal domes and turrets and pinnacles. Those glories and populous realms of joy have quite vanished; he sees now only what his heart desires—a silent land of rest. No person will greet him there; he will land and go up alone into that empty solitary place, a still, gray wilderness extending inland and upward hundreds of leagues, an

²*Cassiterides*, literally "the tin islands"; mentioned by Herodotus and other ancient writers as somewhere off the northwest coast of Spain.

immeasurable distance, into infinity, and rising to mountain ridges compared with which the Himalayas are but molehills. The sky in that still land is always pale gray-blue in color, and the earth, too, is gray like the rocks, and the trees have a gray-green foliage—trees more ancient in appearance than the worn granite hills, with gnarled and buttressed trunks like vast towers and immense horizontal branches, casting a slight shade over many acres of ground. Onward and upward, with eyes downcast, he will slowly take his devious way to the interior, feeling the earth with his staff, in search of a suitable last resting-place.

And when he has traveled many, many leagues and has found it—a spot not too sunny nor too deeply shaded, where the old fallen dead leaves and dry moss have formed a thick soft couch to recline on and a gray exposed root winding over the earth offers a rest to his back—there at length he will settle himself. There he will remain motionless and contented forever in that remote desert land where is no sound of singing bird nor of running water nor of rain or wind in the gray ancient trees; waking and sleeping he will rest there, dreaming little and thinking less, while year by year and age by age the memory of the world of passion and striving of which he was so unutterably tired grows fainter and fainter in his mind. And he will have neither joy nor sorrow, nor love nor hate, nor wish to know them any more; and when he remembers his fellow men it will comfort him to think that his peace will never be broken by the sight of human face or the sound of human speech, since never by any chance will any wanderer from the world discover him in that illimitable wilderness.

L. P. JACKS

Lawrence Pearsall Jacks was born at Nottingham, England, in 1860. He was educated at the University School, Nottingham, University of London, Manchester College, Göttingen, and Harvard, and holds honorary degrees from Oxford, Glasgow, Liverpool, and Harvard. He entered the ministry as an assistant to the Rev. Stopford Brooke, non-conformist divine and historian of English literature, whose daughter he later married. He subsequently held Unitarian pastorates in Liverpool and Birmingham.

Since its foundation in 1902 Dr. Jacks has been editor of *The Hibbert Journal*, a quarterly review devoted to religious and philosophical topics. In 1903 he became Professor of Philosophy in Manchester College, Oxford, a position which he still fills. In 1915 he became Principal of Manchester College. Seafaring and mountaineering are his avocations. His home is two miles from Magdalen College on a hill from which there are wide-vistaed views across his large garden.

Among his numerous publications are several volumes of collected essays and lectures, including *Religious Perplexities* (1923), *Realities and Shams* (1924), *The Challenge of Life* (1924), and *The Faith of a Worker* (1925). He has written a biography of Charles Hargrove and *The Life and Letters of Stopford Brooke* (1917). His several volumes of stimulating short stories include *Mad Shepherds and Other Human Studies* (1910), *All Men Are Ghosts* (1913), and *The Legends of Smoke-over* (1921). The following essay is taken from *Responsibility and Culture* (1924) and appeared first in *The Yale Review* as one of the "Yale Lectures on the Responsibilities of Citizenship."

Dr. Jacks's service to modern thought has been quiet but effective. As an editor he has furnished contemporary philosophy and religion with a forum and an audience; as a writer and lecturer, he has inspired other men to think, like himself, clearly, honestly, and independently.

His influence as a religious leader has been toward simplicity, directness, and liberalism. His clear-seeing eyes discern beauty and liberty in the reality behind the appearance of religion, and his cry is for more light, more education, for man. Though he is not a propagandist, yet, since he thinks deeply and speaks and teaches with clarity and wisdom, his thought reaches out to an ever-growing circle.

LABOR AND LEISURE*

L. P. JACKS

In the last lecture I suggested that the idea of civilization as diseased is getting a dangerous hold. The dangers are: (1) that the mind of society becomes unwholesomely inverted upon itself, like that of a valetudinarian who is constantly feeling his pulse and taking his temperature with a clinical thermometer; (2) that we come to rely upon remedies, upon legislative drugs, and so contract the social drug-habit; (3) that we suffer ourselves to be exploited by quacks, who make a living out of our fears.

While admitting that functional disorders of a grave kind exist, I cannot accept the theory of organic disease. In evidence that this theory is not sound I cited the extraordinary powers of endurance which the nations of the world displayed in the late disastrous War, and are still displaying in the disastrous peace which followed it. Believing that man is made as much for the endurance of pain as for the avoidance of it, I submitted that our civilization, under a test of pain as severe as any we can conceive, has come bravely off and proved its mettle, which a diseased civilization could hardly have done. I then went on to argue that the theory of a diseased civilization has its origin in certain paltry notions about happiness, and about man's right to be happy, which have held their ground in popular thought in spite of discredit in the high places of philosophy. A human being, I said, is not to be thought of as created for the small-scale manufacture of happiness, nor society as created for mass production of that ambiguous article.

*From *Responsibility and Culture*. Yale University Press, 1924. Reprinted by permission of the author and the publishers.

At the end of all this, I was left with a formidable question. If man is not created for the production of happiness what, in heaven's name, is he created for? To this question I now address myself.

No originality in this matter is now possible. The question before us was answered some twenty-three centuries ago, in a perfectly intelligible and profoundly significant manner, by Aristotle.

The business of philosophy is not so much to explain things as to find the things that explain themselves. This last is by far the more difficult operation of the two—at least it demands a higher order of genius. In our time we have grown so accustomed to approaching our problems through a fog of abstractions—such as “mind” and “matter,” for example—that the thing which explains itself has become impossible to find. In many cases, indeed, the fog has reached such a point of density that philosophy, stuck fast in the midst of it, has come to the conclusion that the fog itself is the reality we are in search of. In Aristotle's time it was different. The fog-bank of abstractions was then no more than a light and transparent mist, through which the things that explain themselves could be readily seen—though even then, no doubt, the eye of genius was needed to see them. That it is, that makes Greek philosophy, especially that of Plato and Aristotle, so profitable an exercise for our modern minds. It enables us to see through the fog of abstractions, of empty phraseology, in which the modern habit of thought has wrapped almost everything we think about.

Aristotle's philosophy of man is a notable case in point. It is a vision of man seen in a light in which he explains himself. Like all things which explain themselves it is, of course, difficult to understand—difficult, I mean, to us moderns, who have been trained to reach our conclusions by circuitous reasonings, and have lost the faculty, which marks the deepest philosophy, of looking into the heart of a fact. This faculty Aristotle pos-

sessed in a high degree, and he exercised it, very beautifully, in his doctrine of man.

It was something like this. Aristotle placed before his mind's eye the figure of a living man, in all the plenitude of his manhood. He saw him there, standing erect, alert and ready, with the fire of life radiating from his person, with all his powers, aptitudes, capacities, and versatilities imprinted on his body and expressed on his countenance. Aristotle looked him up and down; examined the attitudes and parts of him one by one; his upright carriage, his eye gazing into the distance, his lips breaking out into speech, and above all his hands, his wonderful hands with their five mysterious fingers. Then, putting the parts together, he took in the vision as a whole, deeply meditating on the subject before him; and finally, with a directness rare in philosophy, he asked himself this question—What is that fine creature *for*? What does the cut of him suggest? Happiness? Smooth-flowing enjoyment? Not at all! That fine creature is for *action*. With that keen eye of his, looking out into the distance for opportunities, with that alert figure ready to start forward, with those five mysterious fingers eager for occupation, and with all the rest of him, who can doubt for a moment that this creature was meant for *action*—for undertaking difficult enterprises, for embarking on long expeditions by sea and by land, for achieving the highest excellence on a thousand roads, for enduring tremendous strains and protracted vigils, for sweeping and majestic operations, for standing hard knocks from fate and from circumstance—aye, and for giving hard knocks in return? Action the end of him! Action the meaning of him! Action is what the fine creature is *for*! It came in a flash, and down went the first principle of Aristotle's anthropology—the *end of man is an action*.

Compare that with the "paltry speculation" about happiness which arose in England about the time of that disreputable monarch Charles II and afterwards spread like a poisonous

miasma over both sides of the Atlantic—"happiness our being's end and aim." Compare it, you young men, and make your choice. Take it with you into the abodes of luxury and idleness and tell it out to the people there who are bored to death. Arm yourselves with it when the quack doctors come along with their remedies for "unhappiness." Remember it when you are unhappy yourselves, as no power on earth can prevent you from being sometimes, and let it silence your complaints, whether they be against the universe or against your fellow men. The end of man is an action!

When Aristotle had finished with the individual he turned to the state. Or rather, he began discoursing about the state, for he had been thinking about it all the time he had been looking on the individual and asking himself what the fine creature was for. He had seen the state prefigured in that individual—another fine creature, growing out of the first and again entering into him as the principle of his action, and helping his action to keep true to its appointed path—which is the pursuit of excellence in everything that his hand or his brain finds to do. The state, for Aristotle, is, in essence, an educational enterprise, just as it was for Plato. What else can it be when he defines it as "a means to the good life," as a principle entering into the lifeblood of the citizen and helping him not to live only, but to live *well*—a different thing from the happiness factory which the social doctors of today expect the state to be, and condemn it as diseased for not being?

I have sometimes wondered what Aristotle would say if he were to come to life again and inspect the modern state as we are trying to run it in these days. What form would *his* "diagnosis" take? "The trouble of your state, of your social system," he would say, "comes from the fact that for a long time past you have been trying to run it as a happiness factory, which it can never be and was never meant to be. But there is nothing fundamentally wrong with it—no fatal disease. The part which helps you to live the good life is still there, the

principle is still at work. Develop that part of it, the educational part, the humanistic part, cease thinking of the state as a physic shop for providing you with remedies for your unhappiness, and you will find in a generation or two that you have better states and better relations between states than have ever existed before."

There is only one thing more I have to say about Aristotle, and it is by way of answering a possible criticism. "Aristotle," the critic will say, "is not so indifferent to happiness as you make out. Is there not a thing called *εὐδαιμονία*¹ which he promises to those who live the good life? And what, pray is *εὐδαιμονία* but happiness—smooth-flowing enjoyment?"

I answer, it is nothing of the kind. *Εὐδαιμονία* means "good demonship." And the matter is just this: that if you live a good life you will have a good demon; you will be a well-demoned or *εὐδαίμων* man. And what will your good demon do for you? Well, he will open your eyes. He will teach you to look into the heart of the fact. He will give you those flashes of intuition which reveal the reality of things. He will guide you in hitting the mark. Your good demon will correct you; he will correct the distortions of your vision, and you will be "happy" in the sense that the man is "happy" whom the Lord correcteth. You will find reality. You will hit the mark. Live the good life, then, and this *εὐδαιμονία*, this good demonship, this constant correction by the Lord, shall most assuredly be yours. The man blessed with a good demon, said the pagan; the man blessed with the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, said the Christian.

With this doctrine before us, this ancient doctrine of man as a being made for activity, and of society as a means to improving the quality of his actions, let us now translate it into terms appropriate to the industrial civilization of our time. That can be done in a sentence. The activity through which men and nations are now to realize themselves is the thing we

¹*εὐδαιμονία*, *eudaimonia*.

call *labor*, the actual contribution which each of them is making, by the work of the body or the work of the mind, to the value of the common life. Man, a creator of values; labor as the activity through which those values are to be created; the state as a means of educating and organizing his labors so that real values may come out at the end of them; this is the conception of man, and of the state, that I now commend to you in place of that other and debased conception—of man as made for happiness, and of the state as a contrivance for the mass production of that article.

If you accept the substitution, what follows? It follows that your responsibilities as a citizen will focus on the duty of making your life, through your labor, productive of real value, and of helping your fellow citizens to use their lives in the same manner. How that may be done best I shall explain more fully in my lecture on education—for it is obviously an educational enterprise that is here involved. Enough for the moment if we are clear on the general principle, and see the immense expansion of social duty, and feel the deeper sense of responsibility that follows from it. Social duty is no longer a mere question of making the right use of your vote for the promotion of happiness. It becomes the question of making the right use of your whole personality, of your whole life, and of helping others to do the same, for the creation of real value. Your vocation, whatever it may be, is now the great field of social service, in which, through the labor that has fallen to you, you make your contribution of excellent performance. The well doing of everything that needs to be done is now your motto, and the motto of the entire community of which you are a member.

I offer you that as the translation into terms appropriate to our highly complex industrial civilization of Aristotle's doctrine that the end of man is activity—the well doing of everything that needs to be done, on the great field of human labor. I offer it as indicating the only possible line on which industrial

civilization can advance to better things. When its significance has been fully grasped, and when all that botheration about "happiness" has been finally got rid of, we shall be in the way to a renaissance, to a great revival—a revival of the arts, to begin with—for art is nothing else than the well doing of what needs to be done; then a revival of morality—for there can be no sound morality while men are scamping their jobs; and, lastly, a revival of religion—because there can be no religion which is not in its essence a religion of work—a dedication of one's life to the pursuit of excellence in all the labors belonging to our place in the social complex.

It is not the labor of any particular class, such as the manual workers, that we are here concerned with, but the labor of the whole community in the endless variety of occupations, from the simplest to the most highly specialized, from digging in the ground to governing the state, from the bench of the carpenter to the operating table of the surgeon, from the stokehold of the ship, where men are shoveling coals into a furnace, to the studio of the artist, where things of beauty are being created. We need to think of all that as though it were a single whole, but a whole made up of an immense number of functions, which are not really separate, but all connected and mutually dependent, all united and woven together with the general task of carrying on the life of society from year to year and from century to century. The whole community may be considered as though it were a single laboring unit, with ten thousand different tasks distributed among its members, all linked together into the one common task which we call civilization. Looking at labor in that synoptic manner, one may say, in homely language, that society has only one job to offer to its members. The name of it is civilization, or, if you prefer, progress. We may be farmers or statesmen, carpenters or surgeons, stokers or artists, teachers, lawyers, shopkeepers, clergymen—what you will; but these vocations are only the different names we have for our different contributions to the

one task we all share in common, that of carrying forward the work of civilization, which is the work of the ages, and which some call the Kingdom of God.

It is a fruitful way of looking at the matter. For certain purposes, of course, we have to look at labor piecemeal, to consider its different varieties one by one. But when we have done that, when we have analyzed labor into the various trades and callings, and considered what is due to each, then we need to bring them all together again, and see them combining with one another into the unitary task which society as a whole has to accomplish, the vision of the world's labor as a unitary operation. In that way we shall see what a tremendous task we are confronted with in these days—that, namely, of keeping the good which civilization has won already and then carrying it on to something better; we shall see this task demanding from each of us the uttermost of his strength and his courage; each separate function will be ennobled by this vision of the great whole to which it contributes; we shall be more anxious to make our own work a real contribution to it, and not a sham one; and above all we shall be more ready to value the contributions which other men and other nations are making, and without which our own would not be possible. The more that view of the matter sinks into our minds the more unwilling we shall be to waste our energies in mutual quarrels and in wars, and the more eager we shall become to devise means of coöperation, of pulling together.

Conceiving labor, then, as the "action" through which industrial civilization is to realize whatever higher possibilities are hidden within it, let us now ask what leisure is, and how it stands related to the general responsibilities of the citizen.

Leisure is commonly thought of in terms which represent it as the opposite of labor, as a state when responsibility approaches the vanishing point, when exertion ceases, and the worker gives himself up to rest and enjoyment. In the hours

of labor we do our duty; in the hours of leisure we have no duty but abandon ourselves to impulse and inclination.

There is an element of truth in this conception, especially in the emphasis it lays on the necessity of rest. But if taken as the whole truth about leisure it leads to conclusions which are absurd and disastrous.

So far as leisure means the state of having nothing to do, of having no duties to perform but only inclinations to follow, there is no prospect that leisure will ever become the general lot of mankind. The indications point in the opposite direction. If the world of our day has little room for idle people, the world of the future will have still less. There are no signs that I can see that society is advancing toward a workless state of existence, when men will be able to live the life of lotus-eaters. In the kind of civilization we have created, everybody is needed to put his shoulders to the wheel, and in the higher civilization which is to arise out of this, our posterity shall be more fully employed than we are. The higher our civilization becomes, the more it will demand of us all in the way of vigor, industry, skill, and forethought. The challenge of labor is an increasing challenge; the higher powers are not going to make things easier at that point. They will continue in the future as in the past to give society a task proportioned to its powers. As intelligence increases, as science becomes more efficient, as organization becomes more perfect, as liberty becomes more real, we may look out for a corresponding increase in the demand for industry, for courage, for loyalty. To each man according to his several ability. To each age according to its several ability. I see no prospect of a workless civilization—of a state of things when unemployment will be abolished through the abolition of employment, as a wag recently suggested it might be.

What then is leisure? Well, if you look into it you will find this: that our leisure, especially when we are actively following our impulses, *is the time when we are making the greatest*

demands on the services of our fellow men. It has been said, with a great deal of truth, that one man's leisure is another man's labor. Our enjoyments, even our refined enjoyments, are possible only because a host of silent workers are providing us with the means for enjoying ourselves. Behind your leisure and mine lies the toil of the silent multitudes. We do well to remember it.

In Mr. Bertrand Russell's book² to which I referred in my last lecture, he draws a distinction between labor and leisure of the type I am now criticizing. He treats them as opposites of one another. Labor stands for that part of our life where we are the servants of society, acting under orders. Leisure is that other and better part where we are free men and doing what we please. The object at which we should aim, thinks Mr. Russell, is to reduce the labor, or servant part, to the minimum, and to increase the leisure, or free part, to a maximum. Mr. Russell's view of labor strikes me as somewhat aristocratic, though the book itself, like all his books, is very far from being written in the aristocratic interest. He looks upon labor, on the hammering, and plowing, and machine-minding, as a necessary nuisance, as so much boredom—he uses that word several times—which nevertheless has to be put up with in order that society may be provided with the necessities of life. The very opposite, you will observe, to the view taken by Carlyle, who defined labor as the honor and glory of man and the passport to everything that makes life worth living. Mr. Russell thinks further that if science, our great ally, were properly applied to the industrial process, the amount of this drudgery or boredom might be reduced to four hours a day for every man, all the rest becoming leisure in which the worker would be under no man's orders and free to enjoy himself according to his tastes.

Among the leisure occupations which Mr. Russell thinks will become possible when work has been reduced to four hours

²*Bertrand Russell's book, The Prospects of Industrial Civilization.*

a day, I note the following—art, science, thought, contemplation of the universe, enjoyment of the beauties of nature, friendship, and love. Let us look at a few of these leisure occupations and see what they involve.

Art, science, and thought are the most strenuous occupations of man. If you would make good in any of these you must scorn delights and live laborious days! To produce a masterpiece in art, you must go lean for many days, and the passers-by will say of you as they said of Dante, "This man surely has been in hell." In the sweat of thy brow, in the sweat of thy brain, shalt thou *think*, shalt thou achieve the great discoveries of science, the great creations of art!

Then as to the enjoyment of natural beauty. Would you enjoy a mountain? You must climb it. Would you enjoy the loveliness of the dawn? You must be wide awake and stirring betimes. Would you watch the wild animals at play in the jungle? You must run the risk of being eaten by a lion. Would you behold the majesty of darkness—those mighty apparitions that march across the heavens with the star-diadems on their brows? Then you must watch far into the night, with all your faculties at the stretch, till the glowworm pales his ineffectual fire. There is no laziness in leisure of this kind.

And what shall we say of love, as an occupation for our leisure time? Well! Is not the abode of the beloved mostly guarded by a dragon? Your sword must be sharp, your hand steady, and your heart valiant. Is Hero keeping her lonely vigil on the further shore? You must swim the Hellespont to get there. Is Beatrice waiting your arrival in the earthly Paradise? You must go through hell, and there is no other way. If you are out for the leisure which consists in following your impulses you had better keep clear of all that. "The end of man is an action." Here also the antithesis between labor and leisure completely breaks down.

It comes to this, then. The principle that man's end is an

action meets us on every level of life. Met on one level we find that man's life is labor, met on another we find that it is art, science, thought, beauty, human fellowship, and love—the occupations of his so-called leisure. All is of one piece. Leisure is not inaction, but a higher kind of activity. And the problem of our civilization, as I conceive it, is not to reduce labor in favor of leisure—Mr. Russell's method—but to raise labor to those levels of excellence which make it worthy of a man. The transfiguration of labor—the transfiguration of it from a burden that crushes him into a culture that ennobles him; to start labor from the beginning toward those higher activities in which it should end, so that art, science, love, and religion instead of standing aloof from it and apart from it, may come down into it and make it their own. A tremendous problem—a task for giants! But that fine creature whose measure was taken by Aristotle can tackle it—a being not made for the paltry business of hunting after happiness and whining because he cannot find it, but for undertaking distant enterprises, and bearing heavy strains, and embarking on operations of great scope and majesty.

ROCKWELL KENT

Rockwell Kent, in whose work the arts of painting and of writing are merged, is not, technically speaking, an essayist. But the extract which follows, and which forms the opening chapter of *Voyaging*, is a flawless piece of descriptive narrative and withal so interesting an example of prose rhythms that it is here included without apology. It should be read aloud.

Born at Tarrytown Heights, N. Y., in 1882, of New England ancestry, Mr. Kent was educated in a succession of private schools, none of which, apparently, discovered in him the promise of talent. At the Episcopal Academy, Cheshire, Connecticut, he "learned to regard teachers as boys' natural foes." At Horace Mann School, New York, he was "practically classed as a moron" and was the only one of a large class to fail of graduation. At Columbia, where he studied architecture, he led his class for three years and then left with the feeling that he had learned nothing, so far, of the slightest importance to him. "As far as I know," he writes, "everything that I have learned and that has influenced me I've found for myself."

And it must be granted that he has enjoyed exceptional opportunities to find things for himself. From college he went to Monhegan Island, off the Maine coast, where, for several years, he worked as common laborer, carpenter, and lobsterman. The loneliness of this period, during which he turned to books for friendship, he considers the most important experience of his life. "Being *alone* in one's youth is of the greatest importance in the development of one's latent personality and of all the faculties of reflection and imagination—and of practical self-reliance." In further test of this theory, he lived eighteen months in Newfoundland, spent a winter on an Alaskan island with only his nine-year-old son for company and an aged goat rancher for neighbor, and essayed the tempests of Cape Horn in a cockle-shell after sundry adventures in the wilds of Tierra del Fuego with his faithful mate, Ole Ytterock.

The record of his Alaskan experiences is preserved in *Wilderness, a Journal of Quiet Adventure in Alaska* (1920); the search for the

world's end is told in *Voyaging—Southward from the Strait of Magellan* (1924). These are two glorious books, glorious alike in the enchantment of their text and in the drawings with which the author has embellished them. No travel books of recent years can more completely capture the imagination of the reader. Mr. Kent has learned the technique of Defoe.

Although he questions the value of what an artist writes about himself, Mr. Kent comments, "I have always loved adventure and reflecting upon it. As a result, I have *needed* to paint and, because painting alone was inadequate, to write. The arts all seem to me much alike in the character that should distinguish them. I like precision of thought, and force and clarity of expression."

Examples of Mr. Kent's art may be found in the Metropolitan Museum, New York, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Brooklyn Museum, and other galleries. He studied painting under Abbott H. Thayer and others. He is best known, perhaps, for his woodcut-like drawings, which often bear the somber stamp of the master to whom he pays homage, William Blake.

WHY AND WHERE*

ROCKWELL KENT

At last, for the first time in months of fevered work, I paused. The labor, the innumerable difficulties and delays, the anxieties of penury, all, with the launching of my boat from that ship's deck that day, would end. I laughed as I wiped my greasy hands on a piece of waste and tossed it overboard, as I looked down upon the crowd against the rail where my boat hung suspended over the sea. Ancient dismantled hulk, of *your* proud launching had you memories of such a gathering as now appeared upon your deck, of governors and captains, of the rich and cultured and the beautiful? It was spring, there in far southern South America, and the cheeks of the maidens of Punta Arenas glowed with roses such as only the cold, salt sea-wind could make bloom. How beautiful appeared the ladies in their brilliant finery upon that dingy, rusted iron deck, with the wide, blue water of Magellan's Strait above them! How beautiful the world all glistening in the young September sun, the gleaming white and crimson of the flags whipped in the clean west wind, that wind of youth and gayety! And on the snow-white damask-covered hatch stood crystal glasses and champagne! Sweet, sweet champagne! We laughed with happiness; it was the christening of my boat.

We look back upon another spring, mid-spring, and five months earlier in time. It is May in New York. The same west wind has blown the heavens clear; across the profound blue sweep belated clouds trailing their shadows over the city's towers. The sun shines down with such sweet warmth that the stone walls like horns of plenty pour out their living flowers

*From *Voyaging—Southward from the Strait of Magellan*. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1924. Reprinted by permission of the author and the publishers.

until the pavements are a garden gay and beautiful with life. New York is Paradise in spring, an Eden, with infinitely more of happiness and beauty than was ever dreamed of by the shepherd patriarchs. The fruit of happiness and wisdom hangs from boughs so heavy laden down that there's no tempter needed but the fruit itself. There are no gates, no wall, no cherubim with flaming swords to warn and to expel. Here in this happiness the heart cries out its own despair, speaks its own doom and banishment.

How unobserved and silently is the deep measure of the soul's endurance filled; it mounts the rim, trembles a moment there, then like a torrent overflows—the vast relief of action. This hour you are bound by the whole habit of your life and thought; the next by unerring impulse of the soul you are free. How strong and swift is pride to clear itself, from misery or joy, from crowds, from ease, from failure, from success, from the recurrent brim-full, the too-much! Forever shall man seek the solitudes, and the most utter desolation of the wilderness to achieve through hardship the rebirth of his pride.

Within an hour of the thought that I must go I had secured a clerk's berth on a freighter sailing for the farthest spot on the wild, far southern end of South America, of all lands that one hears or reads of the most afflicted and desolate. Because I loved the cold and desolation and the wilderness? It is hard to say.

Tales of adventure and shipwreck, of month-long battles with the wind and sea to round the Horn, of mountain seas a half a mile between their crests thundering eternally on granite shores, have woven about that region of the Sailor's Graveyard the spirit-stirring glamour of the terrible.

And yet how little is known of that region! The clerk at a book store to whom I applied for a map of Tierra del Fuego looked at me with superior disdain and said he'd never heard of it. No, it is not to landsmen that one should turn for knowledge of the world, for after all their world is but those

cluttered portions of the globe that obstruct like reeds the great broad highway of the sea. So in a little store near the water front I found at once what I had sought; and on charts of the sea learned, inversely as it were, and to the precise detail of contour that only mariners' charts possess, what was not the sea but land.

And had the spirit of adventure not been stirred by the nomancy of Magellan, Tierra del Fuego, and Cape Horn, there in cold print and naked portent appeared such names as Famine Reach, Desolation Bay, and Last Hope Inlet; while, suggestive of yet other terrors, stood warnings to shipwrecked mariners against the savage natives of the coast. Here was indubitable confirmation of the glamorous worst that legend had related of that region; and as such it clinched my will to go.

In the confusion, ferment, haste of preparation, three weeks flew by as one; then with paints and canvas, brushes, paper, ink, a tent, blankets, heaps of old clothes and shoes, and a flute—all packed, with seven hundred dollars in my pocket, I was ready. It was the last of May, the eve of sailing. Midnight and pouring rain, the dreary water front heaped high with foreign freight, the pandemonium of harbor sounds out of the salt, damp, mystic, fog-enshrouded darkness; there, amid the reek and sound of voyaging, relinquished love and friendship glowed more beautiful than ever.

We sailed. We cleared the Hook, the land dropped down, the hard horizon of the sea encircled us. My life became a memory and the future broke against our prow and shimmered, and was foam and trailed behind us in the steamer's wake. There was no measure of the time but days and nights, and the passage of these was forgotten in the contentment of their monotony, or concealed in the illusion of swiftly changing seasons as from the springtime of the north the steamer bore us southward through six weeks and seven thousand miles, through the midsummer of the equator to the July winter of the Strait of Magellan.

With the disappearance of land the ship at sea becomes a planetary body moving in the orbit of its prescribed course through the fluid universe of the ocean. It has cast off from the whole accumulated "realities" of life, and these endure but in the memories of the men aboard. Activity is constrained, and the mind turns to contemplation or to thought: the true record of a voyage on the sea must be a record of those illusive imaginings of the almost unconscious mind responding to the hypnotic monotony of the ship's vibrations, of the liquid rustling of the water streaming past her sides, of the endlessly recurrent rhythm of the bow wave, and the even, seething pattern of the wake. The memory of it is of prolonged and changeless contentment.

Of the friendships that by time and circumstances and the dominating monotony of environment were privileged to become close, of those close friendships which also are a part of that intangible but very living intensive experience of the voyage, these pages of dilative adventure may bear no record save the tribute of gratitude that I here pay to Captain Cann of Nova Scotia and to the chief officer, Mr. Reid, of piratical Penzance. But of the third officer with whom less, perhaps, a friendship than a close partnership in adventure came to be shared much must at once be said. And yet, whereas I write of him with the generous permission to handle his life and character with entire frankness, I find myself in turning to his origin and early years confronted with a veil of secrecy that, less—it seemed to me—out of reserve than shame, he never in our eight months of companionship permitted himself to withdraw.

Ole Ytterock was born in Trondhjem, Norway. At fourteen he went to sea on a sailing ship under his father. That father appears to have been a skipper of the grand old school who, having risen through hardship, proposed by hardship to make a man of Ole. After standing a few months of beating, the boy deserted in some foreign port. His father dying a few years

later, Ole never saw him again. And, having cursed him at parting, he loathed his memory.

For years after that Ole's life was marked by similar adventure. The order and number of his desertions, the catalogue of the foreign seaports with which the debaucheries of his stolen freedom made him familiar have escaped my memory. Twice he deserted in Borneo, only to be recaptured. It must have been in this period of his life that, consequent, I conjecture, upon a return to Norway, he became involved in some disgrace that made him, at least in his own bitterness of mind, a man without a country.

Having deserted in Sydney, Australia, he shipped on a freighter bound for Guayaquil. The crew and officers, with the exception of two men, were blacks, and Ole was unmercifully handled on the trip. He promptly deserted on arrival, and being now at the age of twenty, enlisted with the rebels of an Ecuadorian revolution, being given the rank of lieutenant. During a street encounter of the war he was struck on the mouth with an iron bar which knocked out most of his teeth. After a few months he succumbed to typhoid and was confined to the military hospital at Guayaquil. On reaching convalescence he escaped from the hospital, and, in company with another renegade, made his way down the Guayaquil River on a raft, enduring terrific hardships through starvation and heat. They proceeded on foot, barefoot in the hot sands, along the coast for several hundred miles to Callao. There, befriended by the British consul, he obtained a passage to Europe.

Having meantime advanced in his studies of navigation, he qualified as chief officer and served in that capacity, to the conclusion of the War, on three successively ill-fated Norwegian steamers. A torpedo fragment, incident to one of the sinkings, further added to the disfigurement of his face. Following this he served for some time—until her loss, I believe—as mate of an American four-masted schooner. Being stranded in New York, he entered into negotiation with a firm

of lifeboat manufacturers to sail one of their craft single-handed around the world; but through his own demonstration of recklessness he lost their confidence and it fell through. These, with rough accuracy, are the events of the life of Ole Ytterock until I met him, aged twenty-six, as third officer of the *S. S. Curaca*.

He stood five feet eight inches in height, weighed one hundred and fifty-six pounds, and measured forty-two inches about the naked chest. He had a mass of thick black hair low on his forehead, narrow blue eyes, and a mouth that was brutally ugly in its disfigurement. But, hard-featured as he was, his face appeared at times quite beautiful with tender kindness of expression.

On the night of my arrival aboard the ship Ytterock was the officer on duty. "He's crazy!" had been his comment when someone informed him of my destination and purpose. Three days later, at his own suggestion, we had become partners in the enterprise.

"But I have no money to pay you," I said.

"I wouldn't let you pay me," he answered.

And so with heads together we pored over the charts, and, discussing every impossibility of adventure, hit upon a plan that was both practicable and alluring: We'd get a lifeboat, deck it and rig it with a mast and sail, and, laying our course from the Strait of Magellan through the mountain-islanded channels west and south of Tierra del Fuego, sail around the Horn. Therein lay the chance of getting wrecked or drowned or eaten—and we called it settled.

It was a night of mid-July when we entered the Strait of Magellan, and the dark, low shore of the land was scarcely to be discerned. And it was night, and most of us were sleeping, when with the turning tide we swept through the First and Second Narrows and entered Broad Reach. We woke at the clatter of the winch; it was morning, a blue morning and a clear one with a howling wind. We lay at anchor in the open road of Punta Arenas.

You wonder when you see that harbor first, wonder what miracle of time has carried you back over fifty years to open your eyes upon past glories of the sea. You look—and doubt your senses: there they are, the ships, the barks. What world is this, what port? And then your staring eyes discern the vessels shorn and stripped, with lowered yards, dismasted—hulks.

Beyond them is the city, crowded close—a port of commerce; warehouses, a foundry, shipyards, blocks of office buildings, churches, streets of one-story homes and little shops—there at a mile away one eyeful on the wide, desolate, fire-scarred plain of the continent.

Gasping to breathe, we stood there in the gale, my mate and I, and strained to see. Blue, golden day, wild day, exuberant, young. Swiftly and deep the thought of everything had touched us—here on the threshold. Adventurers, alone in a new land, conquerors without a sword, voyagers without a ship, vast needs and little cash, and friendless. With one impulse we turned and saw through eyes that the wind had brought to tears the wild exulting of each other's hearts.

The two days that the *Curaca* lay in Punta Arenas harbor remain in my mind as a prolonged festival, the festival at once of leave-taking and of welcome in a new land. And yet the emotions of leave-taking were uppermost, for in the long voyage the ship had become as home, and the friends aboard as kindred. And in the dark night of parting a poignant forsakenness obliterated the thrill of adventure. Ah, God! that wild black night upon the harbor, the confusion, hubbub, turmoil on the ship; the drunken toasts, farewells, that turmoil of the heart, that sublimation of the heart's pain into happiness and of that happiness almost to tears. They're heaving up: "On board the tug!—Farewell!" We drop away, the widening black water tosses up the ship's reflected lights like flames. We pass out of the illuminated radius into the darkness, and by the darkness into the solitude of the world's end.

STEPHEN LEACOCK

Like Lewis Carroll, his great predecessor, Stephen (Butler) Leacock combines the dissimilar professions of scientist and humorist, having achieved notice in the field of political economy before the world heard of him as a parodist and wit.

He was born, in 1869, in Swanmoor, Hampshire, England, but has lived most of his life in Canada. He was educated at Upper Canada College, Toronto, and the University of Toronto, and "took to school-teaching as the only trade I could find that needed neither experience nor intellect."

Eight years of drudgery in Upper Canada College left him "with a profound sympathy for the many gifted and brilliant men who are compelled to spend their lives in the most dreary and most thankless and the worst paid profession in the world."

His escape was by means of graduate work at the University of Chicago, where he received a fellowship and took a Ph.D., the meaning of which degree is, he says, "that the recipient of instruction is examined for the last time in his life, and is pronounced completely full. After this no new ideas can be imparted to him."

Since 1903 he has been head of the Department of Economics and Political Science at McGill University, Montreal.

It will be noted from the autobiographic passages quoted above that Dr. Leacock's humor is sometimes barbed. Even when he is not writing in a sardonic mood (and he is good-natured most of the time), there is shrewd and illuminating commentary hidden beneath the fun. This is especially true of *My Discovery of England* (1922), from which the following essay is reprinted. And in *Literary Lapses* (1910), *Nonsense Novels* (1911), *Frenzied Fiction* (1917), and other parodies there is present, in spite of the boisterous comedy, a discriminating and critical judgment of the author whose traits are burlesqued. Other volumes that have helped to make Dr. Leacock famous are *Behind the Beyond* (1913), *Moonbeams from the Larger Lunacy* (1915), and *Further Foolishness* (1916).

Professor Leacock is also the author of *Elements of Political Science* (1906); what he thinks of this and similar achievements is perhaps indicated in his remark that he would rather have written *Alice in Wonderland* than the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

IMPRESSIONS OF LONDON*

STEPHEN LEACOCK

Before setting down my impressions of the great English metropolis—a phrase which I have thought out as a designation for London—I think it proper to offer an initial apology. I find that I receive impressions with great difficulty and have nothing of that easy facility in picking them up which is shown by British writers on America. I remember Hugh Walpole telling me that he could hardly walk down Broadway without getting at least three dollars' worth and on Fifth Avenue five dollars' worth; and I recollect that St. John Ervine came up to my house in Montreal, drank a cup of tea, borrowed some tobacco, and got away with sixty dollars' worth of impressions of Canadian life and character.

For this kind of thing I have only a despairing admiration. I can get an impression if I am given time and can think about it beforehand. But it requires thought. This fact was all the more distressing to me inasmuch as one of the leading editors of America had made me a proposal, as honorable to him as it was lucrative to me, that immediately on my arrival in London—or just before it—I should send him a thousand words on the genius of the English, and five hundred words on the spirit of London, and two hundred words of personal chat with Lord Northcliffe. This contract I was unable to fulfill except the personal chat with Lord Northcliffe, which proved an easy matter as he happened to be away in Australia.

But I have since pieced together my impressions as conscientiously as I could and I present them here. If they seem

*From *My Discovery of England*. Copyright, 1922, by Dodd, Mead and Company, Inc. Reprinted by permission of the author and the publishers. Slightly abridged.

a little bit modeled on British impressions of America I admit at once that the influence is there. We writers all act and react on one another; and when I see a good thing in another man's book I react on it at once.

London, the name of which is already known to millions of readers of this book, is beautifully situated on the river Thames, which here sweeps in a wide curve with much the same breadth and majesty as the St. Jo River at South Bend, Indiana. London, like South Bend itself, is a city of clean streets and admirable sidewalks, and has an excellent water supply. One is at once struck by the number of excellent and well-appointed motor cars that one sees on every hand, the neatness of the shops, and the cleanliness and cheerfulness of the faces of the people. In short, as an English writer said of Peterborough, Ontario, there is a distinct note of optimism in the air. I forget who it was who said this, but at any rate I have been in Peterborough myself and have seen it.

Contrary to my expectations and contrary to all our transatlantic precedent, I was *not* met at the depot by one of the leading citizens, himself a member of the Municipal Council, driving his own motor car. He did *not* tuck a fur rug about my knees, present me with a really excellent cigar, and proceed to drive me about the town so as to show me the leading points of interest—the municipal reservoir, the gas works, and the municipal abattoir. In fact, he was not there. But I attribute his absence not to any lack of hospitality, but merely to a certain reserve in the English character. They are as yet unused to the arrival of lecturers. When they get to be more accustomed to their coming they will learn to take them straight to the municipal abattoir just as we do.

For lack of better guidance, therefore, I had to form my impressions of London by myself. In the mere physical sense there is much to attract the eye. The city is able to boast of many handsome public buildings and offices which compare favorably with anything on the other side of the Atlantic.

On the bank of the Thames itself rises the power house of the Westminster Electric Supply Corporation, a handsome modern edifice in the later Japanese style. Close by are the commodious premises of the Imperial Tobacco Company, while at no great distance the Chelsea Gas Works add a striking feature of rotundity. Passing northward, one observes Westminster Bridge, notable as a principal station of the underground railway. This station and the one next above it, the Charing Cross one, are connected by a wide thoroughfare called Whitehall. One of the best American drug stores is here situated. The upper end of Whitehall opens into the majestic and spacious Trafalgar Square. Here are grouped in imposing proximity the offices of the Canadian Pacific and other railways, the International Sleeping Car Company, the Montreal *Star*, and the Anglo-Dutch Bank. Two of the best American barber shops are conveniently grouped near the Square, while the existence of a tall stone monument in the middle of the Square itself enables the American visitor to find them without difficulty. Passing eastward toward the heart of the city, one notes on the left hand the imposing pile of St. Paul's, an enormous church with a round dome on the top, suggesting strongly the First Church of Christ (Scientist) on Euclid Avenue, Cleveland. But the English churches not being labeled, the visitor is often at a loss to distinguish them.

A little farther on one finds oneself in the heart of financial London. Here all the great financial institutions of America—the First National Bank of Milwaukee, the Planters National Bank of St. Louis, the Montana Farmers Trust Company, and many others have either their offices or their agents. The Bank of England—which acts as the London agent of the Montana Farmers Trust Company, and the London County Bank, which represents the People's Deposit Company of Yonkers, New York, are said to be in the neighborhood.

This particular part of London is connected with the existence of that strange and mysterious thing called "the City."

I am still unable to decide whether the City is a person, or a place, or a thing. But as a form of being I give it credit for being the most emotional, the most volatile, the most peculiar creature in the world. You read in the morning paper that the City is "deeply depressed." At noon it is reported that the City is "buoyant," and by four o'clock that the City is "wildly excited."

I have tried in vain to find the causes of these peculiar changes of feeling. The ostensible reasons, as given in the newspaper, are so trivial as to be hardly worthy of belief. For example, here is the kind of news that comes out from the City:

The news that a *modus vivendi* has been signed between the Sultan of Kowfat and the Shriek-ul-Islam has caused a sudden buoyancy in the City. Steel rails, which had been depressed all morning, reacted immediately while American mules rose up sharply to par. . . .

Monsieur Poincaré, speaking at Bordeaux, said that henceforth France must seek to retain by all possible means the ping-pong championship of the world: values in the City collapsed at once. . . .

Dispatches from Bombay say that the Shah of Persia yesterday handed a golden slipper to the Grand Vizier Feebli Pasha as a sign that he might go and chase himself. The news was at once followed by a drop in oil, and rapid attempt to liquidate everything that is fluid. . . .

But these mysteries of the City I do not pretend to explain. I have passed through the place dozens of times and never noticed anything particular in the way of depression, or buoyancy, or falling oil, or rising rails. But no doubt it is there.

A little beyond the City and farther down the river the visitor finds this district of London terminating in the gloomy and forbidding Tower, the principal penitentiary of the metropolis. Here Queen Victoria was imprisoned for many years.

Excellent gasoline can be had at the American garage immediately north of the Tower, where motor repairs of all kinds are also carried on.

These, however, are but the superficial pictures of London

gathered by the eye of the tourist. A far deeper meaning is found in the examination of the great historic monuments of the city. The principal ones of these are the Tower of London (just mentioned), the British Museum, and Westminster Abbey. No visitor to London should fail to see these. Indeed, he ought to feel that his visit to England is wasted unless he has seen them. I speak strongly on the point because I feel strongly on it. To my mind there is something about the grim fascination of the historic Tower, the cloistered quiet of the Museum, and the majesty of the ancient Abbey, which will make it the regret of my life that I didn't see any one of the three. I fully meant to, but I failed; and I can only hope that the circumstances of my failure may be helpful to other visitors.

The Tower of London I most certainly intended to inspect. Each day, after the fashion of every tourist, I wrote for myself a little list of things to do, and I always put the Tower of London on it. No doubt the reader knows the kind of little list that I mean. It runs:

1. Go to bank.
2. Buy a shirt.
3. National Gallery.
4. Razor blades.
5. Tower of London.
6. Soap.

The itinerary, I regret to say, was never carried out in full. I was able at times both to go to the bank and to buy a shirt in a single morning; at other times I was able to buy razor blades and almost to find the National Gallery. Meantime I was urged on all sides by my London acquaintances not to fail to see the Tower. "There's a grim fascination about the place," they said; "you mustn't miss it." I am quite certain that in due course of time I should have made my way to the Tower but for the fact that I made a fatal discovery. I found out that the London people who urged me to go and see the

Tower had never seen it themselves. It appears they never go near it. One night at a dinner a man next to me said:

"Have you seen the Tower? You really ought to. There's a grim fascination about it."

I looked him in the face. "Have you seen it yourself?" I asked.

"Oh, yes," he answered, "I've seen it."

"When?" I asked.

The man hesitated. "When I was just a boy," he said. "My father took me there."

"How long ago is that?" I inquired.

"About forty years ago," he answered. "I always meant to go again, but I don't somehow seem to get the time."

After this I got to understand that when a Londoner says, "Have you seen the Tower of London?" the answer is, "No, and neither have you."

Take the parallel case of the British Museum. Here is a place that is a veritable treasure-house, a repository of some of the most priceless historical relics to be found upon the earth. It contains, for instance, the famous Papyrus Manuscript of Totmes II of the first Egyptian dynasty—a thing known to scholars all over the world as the oldest extant specimen of what can be called writing; indeed, one can see here the actual evolution (I am quoting from a work of reference, or at least from my recollection of it) from the ideographic cuneiform to the phonetic syllabic script. Every time I have read about that manuscript and have happened to be in Orillia, Ontario, or Schenectady, New York, or any such place, I have felt that I would be willing to take a whole trip to England to have five minutes at the British Museum, just five, to look at that papyrus. Yet as soon as I got to London this changed. The railway stations of London have been so arranged that to get to any train for the north or west the traveler must pass the British Museum. The first time I went by it in a taxi I felt quite a thrill. "Inside those walls," I thought to myself, "is

the Manuscript of Totmes II." The next time I actually stopped the taxi.

"Is that the British Museum?" I asked the driver.

"I think it is something of the sort, sir," he said.

I hesitated. "Drive me," I said, "to where I can buy safety-razor blades."

After that I was able to drive past the Museum with the quiet assurance of a Londoner, and to take part in dinner-table discussions as to whether the British Museum or the Louvre contains the greater treasures. It is quite easy anyway. All you have to do is to remember that the Winged Victory of Samothrace is in the Louvre, and the Papyrus of Totmes II (or some such document) is in the Museum.

The Abbey, I admit, is indeed majestic. I did not intend to miss going into it. But I felt, as so many tourists have, that I wanted to enter it in the proper frame of mind. I never got into the frame of mind; at least not when near the Abbey itself. I have been in exactly that frame of mind when on State Street, Chicago, or on King Street, Toronto, or anywhere three thousand miles away from the Abbey. But by bad luck I never struck both the frame of mind and the Abbey at the same time.

But the Londoners, after all, in not seeing their own wonders, are only like the rest of the world. The people who live in Buffalo never go to see Niagara Falls; people in Cleveland don't know which is Mr. Rockefeller's house, and people live and even die in New York without going up to the top of the Woolworth Building. And anyway the past is remote and the present is near. I know a cab driver in the city of Quebec whose business in life it is to drive people up to see the Plains of Abraham, but unless they bother him to do it, he doesn't show them the spot where Wolfe fell; what he does point out with real zest is the place where the Mayor and the City Council sat on the wooden platform that they put up for the municipal celebration last summer.

No description of London would be complete without a reference, however brief, to the singular salubrity and charm of the London climate. This is seen at its best during the autumn and winter months. The climate of London and indeed of England generally is due to the influence of the Gulf Stream. The way it works is thus: The Gulf Stream, as it nears the shores of the British Isles and feels the propinquity of Ireland, rises into the air, turns into soup, and comes down on London. At times the soup is thin and is in fact little more than a mist: at other times it has the consistency of a thick *potage St. Germain*. London people are a little sensitive on the point and flatter their atmosphere by calling it a fog; but it is not: it is soup. The notion that no sunlight ever gets through and that in the London winter people never see the sun is of course a ridiculous error, circulated no doubt by the jealousy of foreign nations. I have myself seen the sun plainly visible in London, without the aid of glasses, on a November day in broad daylight; and again one night about four o'clock in the afternoon I saw the sun distinctly appear through the clouds. The whole subject of daylight in the London winter is, however, one which belongs rather to the technique of astronomy than to a book of description. In practice daylight is but little used. Electric lights are burned all the time in all houses, buildings, railway stations, and clubs. This practice, which is now universally observed, is called Daylight Saving.

ROBERT LYND

Robert Lynd, London journalist, is a transplanted Irishman, having been born in Belfast in 1879 and educated there at Queen's College. But unlike his famous fellow countryman, Bernard Shaw, his native wit has not taken the form of biting satire; rather it has mellowed into a rich good-humor, a quality which, he writes, is "the crown and the most lasting of the virtues."

As literary editor of the *Daily News*, columnist (or "middle writer") on the *New Statesman*, and reviewer for *The Nation* and other British periodicals, he might, one would suppose, fall into the easy platitudes, the hasty diction, the occasional inanity of every journalist who must turn out a daily stint. But Lynd successfully avoids the pitfalls of journalism, while making the most of its thrilling stimulus to creative activity. His essays are almost always fresh, inviting, entertaining.

In his earlier books, *Home Life in Ireland* (1909), *Rambles in Ireland* (1912), *The Passion of Labor* (1920), and others, he is preoccupied with political and social theories; in his later collections of essays, the purpose is more purely literary. The most important of these are *The Pleasures of Ignorance* (1921), *Solomon in All His Glory* (1922), *The Blue Lion* (1923), from which "The Shy Fathers" is reprinted and *The Orange Tree* (1926).

THE SHY FATHERS*

ROBERT LYND

It is difficult to refuse a child's invitation, even when it is to attend the breaking-up ceremony at a school. At first, I pleaded shyness; but my niece said with a pout, "That's what all the men say. Elizabeth says her father's shy, but she's simply going to make him come; and Ann's father says he's too shy, but Ann's going to make him come, too. Why should all the fathers be shy?" "I don't know anything about the fathers," I told her; "I can only answer for the uncles." "Well, why should uncles be shy?" That, I confess, bowled me. "Oh, well," I said, "I'll come along with the shy fathers."

I admit I should not have gone if I had not been fairly sure that the shy fathers would be there in considerable numbers. The thought of being present in a large schoolroom, with no other man present, in the midst of a throng of far from shy women and children, I find terrifying to the imagination. It is not that I dislike the company of women and children: on the whole, I think it the best company in the world. But, as Bacon has said, a crowd is not company, and the loneliness of a man entirely surrounded by women and children surpasses even the loneliness of a man isolated in the middle of the Sahara. Apart from this, however, I think there are several reasons for the shyness of fathers when they are pressed by their children to go to a breaking-up party. The average father, I suspect, is afraid of what his children's school friends may think of him. He knows that, by the grace of God, his own children do not see him as he really is. They play games with him as with an equal. They laugh at least at some of his jokes. They appear at times to regard him as the richest, the

*From *The Blue Lion and Other Essays*. Methuen and Company, Ltd., 1923. Reprinted by permission of the author and James B. Pinker & Son, Literary Agents.

bravest and the cleverest man in the world. Has not one boasted of one's own father? I remember at the age of eight boasting to a bosom friend that my father was a multi-millionaire. He had boastfully said that his father had a million pounds. I said that my father had three. And, for all I knew, it might have been true. A child, indeed, is reluctant to believe that there may be fathers in the world superior in any way to its own. A friend of mine, an occasional writer of mediocre verse, was referring to some story about Blake the other day, when his ten-year-old daughter interrupted him to ask who Blake was. "Oh, he was a genius—wrote 'Tiger, tiger,' " said her father. "Was he as big a genius as you?" inquired the little girl. "Good gracious, you mustn't call me a genius!" he told her. "I think you are," she said, gently but firmly. "Why"—he explained the situation—"I couldn't write 'Tiger, tiger,' if I lived to be a thousand." "I would rather have 'O Bonar, Bonar, why thus dishonor?'" she told him, quoting the first line of a set of atrocious political verses he had written. Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.

I do not, I may say, suggest that a father never sees the little waves of criticism stealing into his child's face, or that he has any reason to fear that his child is likely, for any long period of time, to mistake him for a god. He knows that the process of finding him out may be a slow one, but that it is cumulative and that it is sure. But he also knows that his child, as a rule, overestimates him in a way in which no other child would. That is why, when he is asked to submit himself to the critical eyes of his children's schoolfellows, he feels suddenly shy and apprehensive. No man may be able to add a cubit to his stature, but he has an uneasy suspicion that the eyes of other people's children may be able to take several cubits off. Even so, I do not think that it is mainly an injury to his vanity that the shy father fears. After all, if other people's children do not like him, he can always avenge himself by disliking them twice as much. It is chiefly on his children's account that he feels

shy. Being sentimental, he feels—or pretends to feel—that he is unworthy to be the father of such wonderful children, and he shrinks from saddling them with a second-rate parent in the presence of their friends. He must look, he tells himself, an odd sort of fish, and though, Heaven knows, all the other fathers of his acquaintance look as odd sorts of fish as you could wish to meet, still he does not like the notion of an odd sort of fish being seen in public as the father of these particular children. He would hate to see his children appearing in ridiculous clothes; he hates equally the thought of their appearing with a ridiculous parent.

There is, I am told, no greater happiness known on earth than that of a father who, after a party to which his children's school friends have been invited, can lie back in his chair and tell himself that he did not behave so badly after all. It is always pleasant to pass an examination, but there is no examination which it is a more blessed relief to pass than an examination by one's children's friends. Fathers have told me of the nervousness they have seen in their children on such occasions—of the impatient expression they have observed on the little face that, at a joke that has no point or that has a point that nobody is able to see, tells them of the silent soliloquy: "Daddy being silly again!" Pity the tremors of fathers for themselves. Happy is the child whose father acquits himself with credit in the presence of its friends. How delightful it was in one's childhood to see one's own father being a success in such trying circumstances! One cheered in one's soul as he, habitually a silent man, awoke out of his silence into the most fascinating conversationalist, made jokes that were good jokes, and told stories of his experiences that were better than a book. There was no personal triumph to surpass the triumph of having such a father as this. To see the faces of one's friends brightening made, I am sure, one's own face bright. Some children, on the other hand, even children who are devoted to their fathers, accustom themselves from an early age to the

knowledge that their fathers are imperfect creatures whose faults must be put up with as the decree of destiny. I knew one boy whose father, an excellent and interesting man, had the fault of talking too much and of telling a story at twice the length at which it ought to have been told. The boy never showed the slightest irritation, as many boys would have done. When the father had lost his bearings in the middle of an apparently endless anecdote, the boy would merely say, with a smile, "Ring off, governor!" and turn the conversation to another subject. It is not in every home, however, that the long-winded elderly and the impatient young are on such good terms as to be able to face such a situation, not only once, but again and again, without getting to dislike each other. I should myself have been tempted to play the Roman father in such circumstances. For a man may forgive many wrongs, but he cannot easily forgive anyone who makes it plain that his conversation is tedious. "We can forgive those who bore us," said La Rochefoucauld;¹ "we cannot forgive those whom we bore." It was, I suppose, my sense of the enormity of the implied accusation that made me, even in the midst of an unusually long anecdote, always sympathize with the long-winded father even more warmly than I agreed with the "Ring off, governor!" of the boy.

I cannot say that I set out for the school with any intention of making my niece proud of me, but I was buoyed up by the hope that I should not actually disgrace her. As a matter of fact, I do not think there was any chance of disgracing her, unless one had risen from one's chair and made a scene. The shy man usually finds that he has been shy without a cause, and that, in practice, no one takes the slightest notice of him. Sitting in the back row against the wall, indeed, I could watch the children, all costumed as for the stage, going through their dances, their songs, and their plays in almost complete self-

¹*La Rochefoucauld* (1613-1680), a French nobleman of the old régime, author of the *Maxims*.

forgetfulness, without even troubling to look round to see how the shy fathers were getting on.

To see a play performed by small children with a few foot-lights arranged on the floor in imitation of a theater is to feel that all that the saints have said about children is true. How exquisite are their voices, that are all music without the harshness of experience! To listen to them is like listening to the first birds. To see them is to be back in a world of apple trees in flower. There is comedy in the contrast between them and the grave parts they play and the grave speeches they utter as abbesses, poets, and harpers. But the very mimicry of our grown-up world, which begins by moving us, ends by filling us with bittersweet regret that the lives of men and women, after all, are not enacted in voices so sweet and by creatures so fair as these. The feeling may not be a deep one, and may be only for the moment; but, for the time at least, we wish with a pang that life could always have remained like this, that nobody would ever grow up or die, but that the very kings and admirals and prime ministers and thieves and shopkeepers were all children. It may be that, from the point of view of those who have passed into further aeons of existence, kings and admirals and prime ministers and thieves and shopkeepers are so. Who knows but that, in immortal eyes, a conqueror marching from ruined kingdom to ruined kingdom may be but a small boy with a toy sword at his side? After all, the gray-haired and the bald play their parts in almost as complete innocence of what they are doing as these children, who at least know that it is all a game. And, indeed, the contrast between a child of twelve and a grown-up human being is scarcely greater than the contrast between a child of five or six and a child of twelve. I had never realized the enormous gap between six and twelve till a band of little six-year-old dancers came on to the stage with solemn feet and solemn faces and went through their steps in the middle of a half-circle of girls none of whom was older than twelve and none younger

than ten. Kings, Puritans, Cavaliers, mackerel-sellers, and cut-purses of twelve seemed six feet high in comparison with these midget elves. They, too, seemed infinitely small and of a perfect age when they were on the stage alone, but the children of six had only to appear in order to let us see that there was an age still nearer perfection. Not that I should care to be dogmatic on this point. It may be only a passing ripple of sentimentalism that makes one wish that all the world were of so doll-like a stature as this, and that the very editor of the *Times* were a little fellow of six. There are others, perhaps, who would regard the little elf of six as a giant compared to the sleeping infant in long clothes—the infant in the comet stage, as Meredith saw it. The child in the cradle is, for many people, the eternal Sleeping Beauty, and, if one may judge by religious art, it is the age that to men of imagination has seemed most divine. I confess I am content with six—nay, with seven, or eight, or nine, or ten, or eleven, or twelve. And, perhaps, there may be something to be said for any age up to sixteen, or even twenty, or, at a stretch, thirty, and if you advance the age to forty I shall not quarrel with you. There is, within these limits, no year that would not be better if it lasted at least three years; but I am not sure that, at the age of six, a year should not last ten. It may be that if all these children, six and twelve alike, had not been doomed to grow old, I should not have been so moved at the spectacle of their grace and the sweet sound of their voices. And if I myself had remained at their age, I might only have squabbled with them and seen some of them not as angels but with a hostile eye. Hence all may be for the best in the best of all possible worlds, and it may be that to be an uncle appears as wonderful a destiny to a little girl of ten as to be a little girl of ten seems to an uncle. In any case I shall tell my niece that I think the perfect age is not six, but ten. An uncle has only one duty—to make himself popular with his nephews and nieces.

ROSE MACAULAY

Rose Macaulay is a daughter of G. C. Macaulay, late Lecturer in English Literature at Cambridge University and an editor of *The Modern Language Review*. Aside from that sole item, the record of Miss Macaulay's life is hidden. "I never put personal details in works of reference," she says, with traditional British reticence and something of the new Englishwoman's independence. Suffice it to say that she lives in Mayfair, London, and is a witty and personable woman.

Her works show her as a keen and sardonic observer of her fellow beings. Her later novels—*Potterism* (1920), *Dangerous Ages* (1921), *Mystery at Geneva* (1922), *Told By an Idiot* (1923), *Orphan Island* (1924), *Crewe Train* (1926), *Daisy and Daphne* (1928)—are alike in their shrewd sophistication, their unconventionality and the sharp, journalistic snip-snip of their style.

"On Living Life to the Full" is one of the brilliant and amusing pieces which compose her only collection of essays, *A Casual Commentary* (1925).

Before the War, Miss Macaulay wrote nine novels, none of them republished in America; only two of them suggest the satirical tone of her later work, the rest are sentimental. She has also written two volumes of verse.

ON LIVING LIFE TO THE FULL*

ROSE MACAULAY

I read the phrase (not for the first time, for, in slightly different wordings, I seem to have been reading it all my life) in my Sunday morning paper, under the heading "Sayings of the Week." It had been said or written by someone—I think a novelist—in the course of the week, and the *Observer* had been struck by its truth, or perhaps by its absence of truth, and had selected it for quotation, along with other noteworthy remarks made by public characters. (I was once in that column myself, but on the strength of something I had never said, so possibly the novelist had not said this, either.) Anyhow, the remark, whoever made it, set me thinking. "The only real crime," it ran, "is not to live life to the full."

With mixed feelings I meditated on this. First, I confess I experienced some degree of satisfaction in reflecting that, if this were indeed so, my life had been more innocent than I thought. To be sure, I had at every moment in it committed the only real crime; but then, I had committed no others; all those actions which had lain on my conscience need not have burdened it at all, for they were not real crimes. Defrauding the widow and the orphan, ravishing the poor, taking human life or the wives of others, worshiping idols, defrauding railway companies, tax collectors, and penny-in-the-slot machines, closing right-of-way footpaths, running down pedestrians with cars, killing dogs, defacing landscape with advertisements, forging checks, paying bills with bad coins, insulting gray heads and despising infants, smoking in non-smokers, taking babes by train, cheating at rummy, repeating scandal, annexing

*From *A Casual Commentary*. Boni & Liveright, 1926. Reprinted by permission of the author and Curtis Brown, Ltd., Literary Agents.

land, forcing elections on a patient people—all these that I had thought were crimes (I am not meaning to imply, by the way, that I have committed them all) were not real crimes, but only amiable peccadilloes. This was cheering. And it was consoling, also, to reflect that, though I had indeed committed all day and every day, through countless years, the only real crime, so had everyone else. Its commission is inevitable. Life may be prodigious, enormous, morbidly distended, but never can it be quite full. I take "full" to mean full of energies, activities, deeds, emotions. Of course, it is always full of something, if only of inertia, but one must, I suppose, attribute some meaning to the phrase as used, and I take it that its user meant something more active and exciting than that.

My life, then, began to look to me a sadly criminal affair. All the things I had left undone crowded up before my accusing conscience. I had not played mah-jong, dyed the hair, worshiped in a Plymouth Brothers' chapel or a Jewish synagogue, visited the South Seas, the Zoo aquarium, Montmartre, Sheffield, Los Angeles, or Balham, injected cocaine, made a bead purse or a will, won money on a horse, found oil or gold, captured a flea, learned Hebrew, Russian, American, or Chinese, suffered an operation (excepting only on the teeth), stood for Parliament, got married, adopted a child or a pet monkey, taken the veil. . . In the light of all the life I had not lived, the life I had lived, which used to look to me enough, or even too much, faded to insignificance. Why, I reflected with shame, I had not even written a play, taken Kruschen salts, or lectured in America.

I must, I thought, see about this. I must not go on daily committing the only real crime. All the authorities seemed to be agreed about the desirability of fullness—even the Bible, I was sure, said it somewhere—so they must be right. I will, I thought, endeavor to live one crimeless day, even should it be my last. I will begin it early and cause to be brought to me in bed coffee, chocolate, and tea. Thus sustained, I shall rise and go out before breakfast, and run round Hyde Park, knock-

ing down a policeman, addressing to a gentleman or two unsolicited attentions, picking the dahlias, stoning the squirrels, and kidnaping an infant from its perambulator. I shall return home (infant with me, for it is time I became a mother, since I have heard that no woman's life is really full without the patter of tiny feet and the embrace of little arms) and have breakfast to the full, which is the kind you get in Scotland and on liners—grapefruit, porridge, cereals, tea, coffee, ham, eggs, kidneys, haddock, herring, sole, kedgerree,¹ marmalade, honey, jam, butter, toast, scones. Having consumed this to the full, I shall smoke five cigarettes and make out a check to self for all my remaining balance. I shall call at the bank on my way to the full life of London, which cannot be lived with empty pockets.

But the morning, indeed the whole day, is so full of possibilities of amplitude that I do not feel able to make a plan for it; I must trust to the inspiration of the moment. I do not know whether I shall go to Wembley (where life is very full indeed, particularly in the Amusements Park) or to Selfridge's,² where it is, in its way, even fuller, or visit an opium den in Limehouse, or a Christian Science Hall, or Scotland Yard with a confession of murder, or Downing Street disguised as a foreign ambassador. Or I might call on some Bishop, and ask him what he thinks about the Fall. . .

I do not know where I shall lunch, whether at the Ritz, in Greek Street, or at a Lyons' soda fountain, where I can have a mixed fruit sundae, a parfait, a frappé, a shake, an ice cream soda, and a phosphate, all at once. After lunch, I may or may not have a trip in an airplane, a cocaine orgy, a matinée, a scene in the street with the police or in the House of Commons with the usher. I do not know which would be the fullest. Whichever I do, there will be time after it to get out of London; the full life must include the country life, so I will take a train

¹*Kedgerree*, boiled rice with other ingredients.

²*Selfridge's*, a London department store of the American type.

somewhere; it does not matter where, so long as I enrich the journey by pulling the communication cord and informing the guard that my fellow traveler is a dangerous lunatic. Having arrived in the country, I must take a country walk, and, I suppose, pluck whatever flowers are at the moment blowing. It will be advisable to go through private grounds, and also to call at at least one house and inform the owner that I know all and that my price for not mentioning it is ten pounds down. If I get away before the police are summoned, I shall visit the local church, attend evensong, and during it rise to protest against the manner of its conduct, as being too high, low, or broad. That is to say, if it is a low church, I shall pose as a Kensitite³ and protest against its scandalous ritualism; if it is high, I shall be Anglo-Catholic, and demand more candles, incense, confession, and meditation; if it is broad, I shall be modernist, and cry out against its obscurantism. Whichever is the case, I shall live a full life before being ejected from the church.

Having thus lived, I suppose I shall return to London, where, they say, life by night is fuller than in the country. A full night life in London begins, of course, with dinner, and proceeds with several theaters in succession; a few minutes in each will suffice, but one must not fail, during at least one of them, to pay a visit, however brief, to the dressing room of some popular and beautiful actor. If he prove unwelcoming, *tant pis*;⁴ one must procure someone else as supper companion and as dancing partner at one's night club.

I will refrain from following this splendid, this prodigious night, in detail; it might not be proper, since it should include orgies of all descriptions. To complete the circle of my twenty-four hours, I suppose it must continue until morning, since full livers can scarcely waste time in mere sleep. I must end it with an hour or so of some kind of work, for every full life should

³*Kensitite*, member of a low-church sect.

⁴*tant pis*, so much the worse.

contain this unpleasing ingredient. Then, with the morning, wearied but proud, I shall creep to my bed and sleep, I hope, the dreamless sleep of a good conscience.

Thus I mused; as we all weave daydreams for ourselves which well we know will never be fulfilled. But even so, even granted my day and night as I have described them, would they pass the test? Are they full enough? Though to me they look so full, it is possible that to other and fuller livers they may appear pale, attenuated, and empty. After all, they are full of omissions; they do not include standing for Parliament, seeing a hanging or a bus accident, visiting an asylum or the Zoo. They include, in fact, scarcely anything; they do but touch the fringes of life.

We may not, I reflected, judge one another. For one man's fullness is another's emptiness, and who shall be the condemner of his brother's crime?

Thus meditating, I dismissed this preposterous Sayings of the Week with a snap of the fingers. After all, we could everyone of us invent a score of crimes as bad as that, and label them as the only real one, straight off. The only real crime I might say, is not to keep a dog, not to have a gramophone, not to wear the hair shingled. . .

I care not for these arbitrary crime-makers. I can and will make a dozen real crimes to their one. And I will try to persuade the Sayings editor of the *Observer* to put them all in.

DAVID McCORD

A genuinely funny book is perhaps the rarest thing in literature. Once in a while such a book issues from the pen of a gifted youth for whom life has not yet staled. Whether or not he ever writes another such book rests with the gods—all too often the career of the humorist is a rapid diminuendo. Hence it would be rash to predict the future of David McCord as a humorous essayist. One can simply depose that *Oddly Enough* ("my first and best book") is a collection of genuinely funny essays and wish its author godspeed.

David (Thompson Watson) McCord was born in New York in 1897, a several-times-great-nephew of Dr. John Morgan, first Surgeon-General of the Revolutionary Army. Six years of his boyhood were spent in Oregon, part of the time on a ranch. He obtained his education in both West and East, and was graduated from Harvard University in 1921. Since 1923 he has been a member of the dramatic and music staff of the *Boston Evening Transcript*; since 1926 he has added the duties of Executive Secretary to the Harvard Fund Council. He is a frequent contributor to *Life*, *Harpers*, *The New Yorker*, and other periodicals. "Half Hours at Sea" originally appeared in *The New Yorker*. *Oddly Enough* was published in 1926, and has been followed by a slim book of poems, *Floodgate* (1927).

HALF HOURS AT SEA*

DAVID MCCORD

"Believe me, my young friend, there is nothing—absolutely nothing—half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats."

—*The Wind in the Willows*.¹

I

"Clear the battens," yelled the first mate.

"Certainly," I said. "If there is anything I like to see, it is good, clear battens. Where are they?"

I don't recall the exact answer. It contained some general information and several nautical terms. It appears, however, that the battens are *in* the sail (or should be). They are a kind of slat to stiffen it. A common sailor's phrase has arisen: "Slatting about."

I laughed over my error. It is just as well to laugh at such times. Above all, on our boat.

"I thought battens were what you nailed the hatches down with," I explained, when I could control myself again. "All big vessels, I have heard, carry no end of hatches well battened down; and coolies under the hatches. Have you any coolies under the hatches, captain?"

The captain did not answer. The mainsail, which had been partly run up, came down on him at that moment on the lee side and he was completely and inarticulately folded away in a billow of canvas.

When he reappeared he said one or two important things, but there was no immediate reference to my question. I did

*From *Oddly Enough*. Washburn & Thomas, 1927. Reprinted by permission of the author and the publishers.

¹*The Wind in the Willows*, by Kenneth Grahame.

not seem to care to repeat it. It was my first venture at cruising.

Worse than that, it was almost my first time aboard any sailing boat at all.

So naturally, in my clean white ducks, I felt very new at it. I even felt a trifle inferior, though I had known the crew (on land) for years.

It was quite a windy afternoon. Too windy, I thought. I was about to suggest as much, and that we start the cruise in the morning and have a last quiet night ashore and leave the gale to windmills and nature, but I sensed, even then, what is a peculiar trait of mariners: that the more it blows the more they are for it. So I undid my necktie and looked around for action.

There was plenty of it.

The navigator I detected at the foot of the mast, up to his ears in rope. The bos'n was still having a little innocent fun with the battens. The sail was gradually going up. The glass (at the same rate, I believe) was going down. Only the captain was making suggestions.

He looked at me. (I was supposedly the guest of the captain for a pleasant week's cruise, but he often forgot it.)

"Go below and coil the halyards," he said in his abrupt way. The peak and throat halyards, I believe he called them.

I stumbled below. Somewhere in the half-light I came upon a tangle of rope that suggested inventory day on Brooklyn Bridge. I began to coil it.

You may not know it, but mariners are extremely sensitive about the art of coiling rope. It is a sacred art. It is one of the great prides of a hideous profession. Their knotty hands have a compelling, even a soothing, way with rope, and by a few arbitrary passes the most kinky strands of it are made to fall with a truly marvelous grace into beautiful consecutive loops, as a cobra might arch its head under the spell of an insistent pipe.

I sorted out a length suitable for my design (about five

hundred yards, at a guess) and began slowly to wind it concentrically over my right arm. In a kinky and rebellious way it tolerated the crude process until my arm became overloaded. Something had to be done. But what? I tried to slip out of it softly and take the coils by surprise. But you cannot surprise rope. It is thoroughly vigilant and extraordinarily stubborn. I did various things with it, and finally dropped the whole mess on the floor. Then with a sharp curse I kicked it. I did, really.

That was a mistake. In the first place, my foot became rather entangled and made the end of the rope impossible to find. And further it rendered the entire length with which I had been working irritable and acrimonious. Yet I began again. This time I decided to coil it on the floor as I had seen the captain do it. After one or two bad starts I discovered that it went much better thus until I got so dizzy circling about that I had to sit down on a bunk.

There the bos'n found me, gazing sadly at the little pool of halyard.

"You've done it all wrong," he said with private satisfaction. "It goes the other way. Give it here."

I gave it.

So it appears that a rope, a common rope, a mere twisted rope smelling of tar and other vulgar substances, is like a watch: unless it is wound and going the right way it is of no use at all.

Silently the bos'n toiled.

I fell into a contemplative mood and carried the speculation out into wider fields. How like life! Of how little use is anything in this world unless it is going in the right direction: soup, the morning train, the week-end guest, fifty-five shares of Boston common.

I smiled at the parallel.

Then I was ordered on deck.

II

If you are not familiar with a sloop, you have no idea how hard it is to make one's way about on her. I think ours (I am a guest on it) is a fairly large one, forty feet over all or on the water line, I don't recall which. As a matter of fact, the "water line" and "over all" are synonymous terms, for half the time on a brisk day the water line is over all, including my feet.

I mention the cabin first. You can stand up in the cabin. That is, you can stand up in one place (where there is a small skylight) if you are short enough. I am six feet three. Any cabin (according to the international yachtsmen's code) provides standing room if there is a skylight or a glass-covered hatch above. The sloop salesman removes his yachting cap or bowler hat, according to whether he is selling you the boat in the store or on the hoof, pokes his head up into the hatch and the cobwebs and mumbles indistinctly, "Yes, indeed, madam, this is a comfortable cabin with full head room," etc. And he usually gets away with it. The trouble is that on our boat the shaving mirror, the barometer, the life preservers, my extra shirt, and the alcohol stove are distributed in strange places that necessitate crawling to them on all fours. So nobody does much standing below deck. We have practically forgotten how.

Not that we lie down. I have what they call a bunk up for'ard just beyond the stove and not quite inside the bowsprit. There are one or two other things close by, such as a collapsible lifeboat, a spare anchor from the *Leviathan*, and the rest of the cable that was not laid across the Atlantic. The bunk folds up against the hull and is held in position by the anchor. There is no danger of its coming down. This is called the "rest" position. The captain has said in my hearing that when we have found a new home for the anchor (about a hundred

fathoms, I hope), the bunk will be lowered, and I may go to bed. I have just about forgotten how to do that, too.

It is really more dangerous on deck. There is the boom, for instance: a variable quantity, never to be taken lightly. It is the small horizontal telegraph pole that "comes over" when your mind (but not your skull) is elsewhere. On the sea you speak a great deal of *clear* and *clearing*. You say "We cleared the harbor," or "We cleared the deck," or "It's a clear day." Well, when one is in the cockpit the boom, too, is supposed to have a certain clearance. I have never discovered what it is, exactly. A split hair, I expect. I have yet to hear the expression, "It cleared my head."

Another reason why sailors don't wear silk hats is that they are forever tilting their heads back to look aloft. If you think that the gathering of blocks and tackles and jigs and scupper-plugs on deck is cumulative, turn your eyes heavenward to the masthead and behold the legacy of the ship chandler. The navigator has told me that he is really watching the narrow span of mainsail snug to the mast where the wind leans affectionately. But I know better. He is looking at the dim cluster of snuffer-clippers and doodads whence depend these several Jacob's ladders and this Maypole festoon of hemp. He is proud of it and wants you to see it, too. He says he has been up there; and I look at his trousers and know that it is true. I can easily imagine with what delicacy and reverence he ran his fingers over the metal surfaces, and with what priestly care he laved them with gouts of magic oil. Him I could envy at his worship. By just so much is a sailing vessel the least bit Gothic, and man, in that realization, lifts his eyes and mind from the clutter closing in upon his feet to where all things taper to a single point. *Bonum est contemplari.*²

I feel pretty ennobled myself.

²*Bonum est contemplari*, It is good to meditate.

III

The boat was rolling about in a great calm.

"I think," said the navigator, with a kindly yet not exactly admiring glance in my direction, "that we had better teach this young fellow something about ships in general."

"Right," agreed the mate a little too eagerly. "I'll do it myself."

I expressed what I considered adequate appreciation.

The calm continued.

"The first thing," began my enthusiastic mentor, "is to acquire a fundamental knowledge of the different types of boats."

I remember a dairyman who paused once in the middle of a fragrant barn to tell me something of the sort about the different kinds of cattle.

A cow kicked him.

"Given a ship and the sea side by side," continued the mate, "I dare say even you could tell them apart."

I thanked him. (It is just like knowing the soap from the bathtub.)

"But there are still nicer distinctions."

"Such as picking you out from a half dozen lobsters," I suggested.

He did not seem to hear.

"Some of them are easy and some are hard. For the moment you might profitably confine your attention to four."

"Lobsters?" I asked.

"Ships," he replied.

"Good," I said. "What four?"

He cast about for illustration.

"I suppose you understand what a sloop is; I mean, what is meant by a sloop?"

"Yes," I said.

There was an awkward silence.

"A sloop has—er—only one mast."

"Yes," I said, looking at it.

"H'm-m-m."

The mast rocked in gentle encouragement. It was a good mast, and I clung to it.

The mate inspected his pipe. In crises at sea, people turn to tobacco.

"Anything with two or more masts is a schooner."

No one objected.

Somewhere a sea gull screamed.

The mate gazed off into space. Not a sail on the horizon.

"Go on," I urged.

"Except a yawl," he finished importantly. "A yawl would be a sloop but for having a jigger mast abaft the tiller or thereabouts."

I weighed the enormity of that.

How many fine sloops, I thought, have been ruined by having a jigger mast abaft the tiller or thereabouts!

Thereabouts!

I boiled over.

"Why aren't they more specific and definite? Why don't they say 'abaft the tiller' and stick to it? How are you going to locate an undergrown mast that is no more accurately recommended than *thereabouts*? That's the trouble with your blasted sea. It's so large and expansive, and all your boats and tackle are so damned indefinite. Grab the main sheet and what have you got? Nothing but a rope. And a dirty one," I added, glancing at it. "Show me a yawl! Let me see it with my bare eyes!"

Even the captain was impressed.

Half an hour later we sighted one.

"Yonder," said the mate, like an Aladdin who has just rubbed the lamp.

I gazed at the misshapen thing with pity.

"Do you mean," I asked, "that if I were to raise the boat

hook" (one of the few basic marine objects I can readily identify) "abaft the tiller and tie the captain's napkin to it we should become a yawl?"

The bos'n nodded sadly.

"Unless the captain saw you. He's childishly fond of his napkin and not at all partial to yawls. I wouldn't try it."

"All right. I won't."

"The fourth class," the mate continued, "should give you no trouble."

"Why?"

I thought I should say that. It made me seem conveniently ignorant.

"Because there are no junks this side of China. At the rate we've been moving this bright morning I doubt if we are even abreast of the Philippine Islands."

I turned my head. The mate was leaning out to sea.

"What's that?" I asked, pointing.

The bos'n strained his blue eyes.

"That," said he, "is a lighthouse."

"To the left of it, I mean."

"That is Nellie, the beautiful lighthouse keeper's daughter. Surely you've heard of her?"

"No," I said. "To the left, but not far astern."

The bos'n searched carefully.

"By George, I believe it's the mate. He's fallen overboard."

"I believe he has," I said without much emotion.

IV

An unimportant wave broke teasingly over the bow.

We came about, and so did the conversation.

"How many kinds of sails are there?" I asked innocently.

It was a terrible remark.

The crew looked thunderstruck. No one had ever asked them that before. I saw first off that not one of them knew.

They considered a long while.

Then the navigator looked at the jib and at me (but more at me than at the jib) and smiled faintly.

"Several," he said.

A cautious remark.

But not satisfactory.

"I have noticed," I began at once, "that we are using two pretty continuously. This mainsail here, which seems important to keep the boom in action, and that confounded jib up front for which I see no use whatsoever except to provide exercise for tight-rope walkers and high divers."

Another wave slid contented down the deck, and the bos'n jibbed with abandon.

"Captain," I said sternly, "you have been holding out on us. Only this minute I have put down a book on yachting that contains a large folded picture of a sloop in three colors (blue, green, and dead-crab red) and its official rigging. According to a most agreeable account which accompanies it, a sloop (emphatically a sloop) should be the one thing in the world to carry a large overhead."

We shipped a little water.

"Where is our spinnaker? Why isn't it up and flying?"

"Because, you ass, we're not running before the wind."

That struck me as exceedingly careless. Here we were, crawling out at 3 A.M. every morning, early enough to see the stars washed out of the sky and too early to shave, and not even getting a good enough start to run before the wind. Deplorable, I thought it.

We shipped a little more water.

"And how about the balloon jib? I haven't seen *that* around anywhere unless it's what I've been using for a laundry bag."

I drummed a little tune on the backstay. The captain is very strict about the backstays and has them all set at A flat.

"And as for the club topsail"—I gave a sardonic laugh.

"This isn't a club," gargled the mate. "And if it were, you wouldn't be elected."

This sentiment was repeated in different forms.

I went aft and sat in the tender. There was some discussion about cutting me adrift.

"I wouldn't do that," I said, shaking my head.

"Why not?"

"It's nearly *children's hour*." (A very necessary hour on our good ship.)

The bos'n made a noise like cracked ice in a glass.

"So much the worse for you," was his reply.

And he smacked his lips audibly.

"No," I said. "I've the key to the icebox in my pocket."

V

We were hunting for whistling buoys.

I stood for'ard as the lookout, peering stupidly through the dull haze. I sighted a couple of empty bottles and the tray of a trunk.

The captain thanked me elaborately. But his heart wasn't in it. He didn't seem to care for them.

"You don't *sight* a whistling buoy," he explained. "You *hear* it."

A sane proposition.

"What does it usually whistle?" I asked.

"'Red Hot Momma,'" said the mate.

The captain fixed him with sad eyes.

"It just whistles," said he. "As if it had a pain."

"Good," I replied. "I've got one myself. I'll have an ear for it."

For the next hour I shut my eyes and listened.

At last the captain shuffled alongside.

"Hear any?" he asked gruffly.

"Yes," I answered, smiling. "Two or three."

"What!" he roared. He has a three-ply roar.

"Honestly," I insisted. "The last one was about a mile off there, I should say." And I pointed pleasantly at a section of

haze that Hamlet's ghost might have easily enjoyed. "I didn't like the sound of it."

Nor did the captain like the sound of what I said.

"You egg-head landlubber, don't you know we wanted it?"

"No," I replied vaguely. "What for?"

"We're lost; that's what for."

A ponderous thought. I believe I shuddered. However . . .

"Well, perhaps we are," I said stoutly. "But I should get small comfort out of a buoy like that. Now if it came of a musical family ——"

The captain swore exhaustively. He can do it, too.

Then he stopped the poker game, and the crew went into conference. They do that sometimes, even on board ship. The results are about the same as on land.

The navigator said something about laying a new course to pick it up. I offered no suggestion, nor was I called upon for any. I was quite sure that he couldn't mean to "pick up" the buoy literally; but if he did, I hoped he wouldn't stow it in my bunk. There was an anchor there already. I was positive, however, that when he heard it he would let it alone.

There arose some additional talk that threw light on the problem. We could all hear the buoy now. A low, lugubrious sound.

"We want to get a bearing from it," said the navigator kindly, for my benefit.

I expressed interest as a mechanic. My mechanical flair is always asserting itself.

The mate grinned at me.

"Don't you want to get the bearing yourself, Admiral Sims?" he said.

I told him modestly that I didn't know much about such things.

So the mate winked wickedly at the navigator.

"We'll let him row out for it," he said. "It'll be a fine experience."

"Be sure you pick a nice one, Nelson," cautioned the bos'n.

"A nice what?" I asked.

"A nice bearing, of course. A good, smooth one."

"It will be a touching ceremony," mused the navigator.

"I can see it so clearly. The captain will run up the colors, and the bos'n will play 'The Star-Spangled Banner' in his quaint way on the wrong side of the harmonica while we all stand at attention. And just then the boom may possibly come over to see what it's all about. I wouldn't miss it for a new compass."

Even the captain had a word.

"You'll find them in a little box on the top of the buoy."

"And don't forget to drop a dime in, Decatur. It's the customary fee."

I cursed them all roundly and went on deck.

I could see it now, a latticed cone, rising and falling gently on the oily swell. At intervals it exuded the sourest blasts I ever hope to hear. I felt not only lost, but engulfed in misery.

"Blooming turtledove," I said.

VI

It was a pea-soup fog.

The sea, under any fog, is a dull place, but I had never seen it quite so dull, for the mainsail, even, refused to flap. Agreeably muffled, many miles across the slick, sounded the sweet explosions of a lobster boat: the soft catarrhal assurance that industry still thrived. Near at hand boomed the less sweet snoring of the mate. The mate considers that fogs give him the unconditional right to slumber. It is largely for this reason that I dislike them.

"Fog rolling in," sniffles the bos'n.

The mate, bless his little heart, has gone below. He is lovely in his sleep.

At the same time, there is an engaging amount of danger. Not from the mate, lest you misunderstand, but from the fog. The captain had sensed it already.

"We may be run down," he observed.

"I *am* run down," I said, toddling toward the hatch. "I'm sick of living on boiled lobster and weak tea. And I need more sleep."

"Stop!" bellowed not one voice, but three.

I groaned.

During fogs (need I say it?) I am given a tin horn such as I blew upon, temperately, in childhood; and commanded to shriek an ominous warning from the bow. A small boy would laugh at such a noise, but a thousand-ton vessel, I am told, will shudder.

In a fog at sea all sailing ships have the right of way, or else the tugs and excursion boats. One or the other; I forget which.

It was indeed a pea-soup fog. I blew heavily for half an hour.

At the end of that time the mate had awakened, the cream had turned sour, the bos'n was writing to his grandmother, and I was drained of saliva.

Broad on the beam, the *Southport* whistled. I blew some water out of the horn, and we came about. Then we all strained our ears for the sound of the engine.

There is no form of ventriloquism so amazing as that of a steamer whistling in a fog. You reckon it dead ahead, and it roars out but a boat's length astern; it bears down from the port side, and towers over you from the starboard. When a steamer whistles in a fog, a prayer is worth more than the wheel.

The *Southport* toyed with us for ten minutes until I was a nervous wreck, and then shot across our bow without a murmur, while its captain gazed down upon us and quitted placidly to the sea.

When the swearing had died down somewhat, and the bos'n could speak English again, I stole away to my old position for'ard. I lifted my eyes, and the fog with them.

There is no lovelier sight than a fog lifting at sea. The dark speck of rusty gold two points on the weather bow turns out to be an orange, and this great quartering halo of light dissolves into an unemotional can-buoy. Even that stalwart figure at the tiller (as I told him) passes from a Viking silhouette into nothing more than the navigator soberly peeling his nose.

With the lifting of fogs, the illusive and the beautiful harden into reality. Oranges, it is fair to add, no more than navigators.

"Tug and three tows," I announced, conning the sea for what it held. "Four points off the bos'n's wash."

"Glass and three fingers hard astern," piped the mate, who had somehow waked up.

With a sigh, I left the tug and its barges and slipped easily aft to where the captain was doing a Rebecca at the well.

VII

"Polishing brass," observed the bos'n, applying an old rag to a small can, "is not much fun."

Nobody had said that it was.

"The trouble is," I replied, "you've never tried it before. Now I've been polishing steadily since I came aboard, and I can say truthfully that the second week is much better than the first. You begin to eliminate things. For instance it was only last Wednesday that I stopped polishing the stove because I found it was made of iron. Knowing the cook's habits (I squinted at the navigator), I had assumed it was dirty brass."

"Speaking of unskilled labor," the mate reminded me unpleasantly, "I thought you were going to wipe down the jib that first morning. I can still see where you rubbed all the varnish off the hatch-cover. You might have done my shoes while you were at it."

"I offered to do the captain's watch and his wedding ring only he seemed insulted. Didn't you, Captain?"

Apparently he did; and so I looked at my nose in the bin-nacle flange and rubbed it some more.

"I wonder," I mused, rubbing, "what the other side of brass looks like? I expect to work through this by to-morrow."

"If you don't rub any harder than that," murmured the mate, "you won't even take the polish off the rag. Don't forget to squeeze it back into the can when you're through; if we were half capable of your efficiency, an ounce of brass polish would last fifty cruises."

"Well, anyway," said I, "I wouldn't spend the best part of a forenoon trying to see a face like yours in the round end of a scupper-plug. The reward is too small."

For a while we rubbed with abandon.

"Tonight," announced the captain suddenly, while the atmosphere was still tense, "we go ashore."

Dolphins and porpoises broke water for miles around.

"Not," I asked with the Bernhardt catch, "ashore?"

"Ashore."

"What have I done to deserve this?" I begged.

"Nothing," said the captain. "But I'm afraid to leave you aboard—even locked in the cabin. You might fall into a sea-bag."

"But we'll let him row us ashore in the dinghy. That summer-boarder stroke ought to go well against a strong tide."

"If I am a burden"—I began.

"No burden, only a guest," the captain assured me.

The degree of difference is very subtle. The captain alone can define it accurately.

"And we'll go to the movies."

"Something inspiring; eh, mate?"

"A good smashing nature reel," suggested the navigator.

"About the growth of water lilies, say."

"Benneneroil!"

"And a temperance picture for the captain. I'm afraid the

voyage has done him no good. Did you hear him say the other day that one Sauterne deserves another?"

The captain swallowed hard.

I whistled a bit of an old chantey; the mate helped me out with the chorus.

"And there will be real food: out of cows and gardens and kitchens instead of cans with fat tomato labels."

"Ah, yes," agreed the mate, smacking eloquently his unshaven lips, "I could die happy with a shore dinner. And how I once reviled them!"

"Well," I said, my old cheerfulness returned, "I must dress for this."

"There's a law requiring it, even here."

"I shall wear my white flannels, and the captain's canvas shoes (it will strengthen his arches to go barefoot), and the mate's Commodore cap, and that nice little blue tie of the bos'n's. Bos'n, where did you say you put it?"

"I didn't say. But if your eyesight were a little better, you'd see that I have it on."

"So you have. But I shouldn't have detected it," I said, "in such wretched surroundings and against such a dirty background. Why don't you wash it?"

"The tie, you libelous defamer?"

"No, the background."

Fortunately I dodged the heavy object which passed, splashing, into the sea.

"But before you do," I concluded, "let me say I am going below and for'ard to commit myself to sleep."

Amid a shower of compliments and well-wishes, I descended.

"We'll endeavor to keep her afloat, Farragut," leered the last voice.

I pulled the little green curtains that shut me away.

"Call me at Altoona," I said.

WILLIAM McFEE

William McFee, novelist and essayist, was born at sea in 1881, the son of a British sea captain. He was brought up in a suburb of London and educated at Bury St. Edmunds in Suffolk. He served an apprenticeship of three years in an engineering shop at Aldersgate, afterwards joining the staff of an engineering firm in London. As a youth he was accustomed to spend his evenings and Saturday afternoons in libraries and the British Museum or, earlier, at Aldersgate, in the homes of mechanics and workmen. Thus he began an education in both men and books which he has pursued ever since.

His learning, however, is based chiefly on the extraordinary reading of his voyages. At twenty-four he went to sea as a marine engineer, and followed this profession until the end of the War. After becoming an American citizen he settled down to the life of a man of letters at Westport, Connecticut. On all of his voyages he carried books with him, books of unusual range and erudition, and these books he read and digested during the long hours when he was not on duty in the engine room.

During the War he served as engineer officer on British transport and refrigerator ships in the Mediterranean, a tedious duty from which he managed, nevertheless, to extract lively and entertaining copy.

Letters from an Ocean Tramp (1908)—reprinted in America as *An Ocean Tramp*, 1921—and *Aliens* (1914) made no great stir; but *Casuals of the Sea* (1916) was a literary sensation. He has never fully equaled the heights which he attained in this fine novel, the fruit of seven years' work, but in the later and less spectacular books he maintains the same firm style and alert feeling for vivid experience: *Captain Macedoine's Daughter* (1920), *Harbours of Memory* (1921), *An Engineer's Notebook* (1921), *Command* (1922), *Race* (1924), *Sunlight in New Granada* (1925), *Swallowing the Anchor* (1925).

"Syncopating to Philadelphia," from the last-named volume, conveys in style and in matter, the tempo of contemporary America.

SYNCOPATING TO PHILADELPHIA*

WILLIAM MCFEE

Searched long for the word. How to describe one's life without dragging in irrelevancies. Syncopated.¹ Ordered here and there. Moving. No rest. A fabled flicker-show with murmur of mechanism as an undertone and accompaniment. Ordered away—to Philadelphia. Strap-hanging and studying time-tables simultaneously. Sudden thought—car battery needs recharging. Thought unfolds without pause. Use car to get baggage to terminal. Excellent. Thought goes on relentlessly. Use car for journey. What is life without adventure? No more than a dead battery—a malodorous inconvenience.

Fresh battery installed—\$10 deposit—engine humming amiably, and ahead the asphalted felicity of Riverside Drive—mist pearly the fleet in the river. Set meter at zero for the trip. Uptown farewell! We syncopate.

Observe here that Manhattan is aptly described as an impregnable city. Difficult also to get out of. Seven miles on meter and stalled in a welter of wagons at Desbrosses. Mounted policeman stares at car as though he doubted its existence. Mob moves up two yards nearer ferry. Policeman examines car afresh, as though recalling description of stolen machine. Sea-going dunnage in back seat looks suspiciously like the loot of a getaway. Policeman's horse turns his head our way as though thinking same thing. Probably thinking of nose bag, however. We move, with a roar and a jerk. Pay ferry toll. No pursuit. Safe. Meditate during voyage upon mutability of existence. Bromidic syncope.²

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¹*Syncopated*, a musical term denoting a measure into which a new accent or rhythm is introduced over the regular accent.

²*Bromidic syncope*, the jerky effect of the highway is supplanted by the sedative motion of the ferry-boat.

Struggle to escape from shadow of enormous truck. Sound horn. Truck oblivious. Efforts quashed by patrician cars gliding ahead. Finally get out into Jersey City with a gambling motion induced by granite setts³ of roadway. Recall story of pavement of Saint Mark's, Venice, laid in undulations symbolical of sea. Assuming symbolism in bosoms of Jersey City Fathers—No! Quite untenable . . . Bumpity bump! If so, however, if so, streets must symbolize cross between hurricane and tidal bore on Hoang Ho. Bump!

Upper sections of city better. Swirling through park bound Newarkward, meter showing twenty miles an hour, policemen call halt. Cold chills on spines. False alarm. Policemen proffer tickets—10 cents each—carrying votes for Most Popular Cop in Town, St. Jude's Church Social. Prize, chryselephantine⁴ night stick. Buy and shoot ahead—thirty miles an hour. Police all straining muscles to appear popular.

Newark. Market and Broad congested, rendering detour advisable. Suddenly emerge upon broad ways intersecting greens and shadowed by chestnuts. Decide Newark is beautiful town, much belied by squalor and noise of Market and Broad. Very unpleasant features in many towns—Market and Broad. Take road to Elizabeth. Sun setting in orange glow—over Oranges. Distance to Philly, say ninety miles. *Allons!*

Elizabeth, main street, cheerful with lights in the autumn dusk, suddenly suggests food. We eat, marveling at the excessive standardization of American food. Nothing local. Names certainly, as witness our supper of Boston beans, Maryland chicken, Saratoga chips, and so on. But names only. Comestibles same all over. Labels. So much per cent benzoate of soda from here to the coast.

Looms up now great question of Lincoln Highway. Tricolor labels (Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity) nailed by barbarians

³setts, paving stones.

⁴chryselephantine night stick, a gold and ivory club.

to trunks of living trees, indicate we are on it. Bumps. No equality in the superficies. Explain to young companion high ideals of highway. Violent oscillations interrupt eloquence. Car leaps from ridge to ridge. Holes in roadway suggest local antiquaries searching for buried cities. Chasms. Crevasses. Young companion, hazy about Lincoln, is amused at highway. Compelled to admit no necessity to have road so—well, so much in character. Word needed is—rugged. Why so rugged? Marvel also at citizens permitting such deterioration. Citizens growing scarce, however. They and their houses behind us. And road improves. And improves.

Well! Nothing syncopated about this! Forty-an-hour under a setting moon; no wind. Fields of corn in cocks float past in pearl-gray ground mist. Melodious hum of engine lulls senses into species of ecstasy. Recall poem of Henley as young companion accelerates. What was it? Ah! "Speed on the knees of the Lord!" Strange eclipse of Henley of late years. Temporary? What a row when he told the truth about Stevenson! Who was the bigger man? Henley, no doubt, but Stevenson the bigger artist? Indeed, yes. Recall a lecture by Sir Arthur Pinero, years ago, in which he claimed Stevenson as great playwright, only not developed. Had the wrong idea. Must get those Henley-Stevenson plays again and read them up. Fine elocutionist, Pinero. Can hear him now as he announced subject: shining bald head, face hairless except for terrific eyebrows like a great black gash, evening dress ending in large feet. Can hear the words now—"Robert Loois Steeven-son, the drahmatisht," and then an impressive silence.

Yes, Stevenson bigger artist. Henley too—too—interrupted by back-fire—staccato nullification of power. Good metaphor that. Describes Henley rather well. What? Young companion suspects a loose magneto connection. Stop. Correct. Nut tightened, hood down with a bang, and away again.

Yes, he back-fired too much. Think what we owe him as

an editor,⁵ though! Editor has to be a marvelous combination of intuition, crazy enthusiasm, and luck. Must be a live wire among live wires, seeking other live wires. Something of the priest about him, too—a diviner of secret inspirations.

Sudden swallowing up of all things in swirling white fog. Like wool. Wind screen becomes opaque. Masses of vapor roll over slowly, top-heavy, distorting configurations. No reduction of speed. Young companion, leaning out, steers by telegraph poles. Wonderful—confidence of youth.

Trenton. Good roads now—villas wrapped in woolly slumber—occasional solitary car at curb. Halt at center of town for direction. Youth at corner points. Lincoln Highway there! Good. We leap away into the darkness.

Trenton evocative of romantic memories. Recall picture treasured in callow youth—Janice Meredith in *Prisoner of Trenton*. Not tolerable now—still . . . Other pictures, too. Washington at Old Inn. Lady Washington in coach with negroes in blue and silver livery. British redcoats on farther bank of Passayack River. Trenton no more—to me—than such fugitive pictures. Toll house and a bridge. Pay toll. The Delaware River impressive in the fog. Over.

Here begin difficulties. Fog thickening. Lincoln Highway, now it is gone ten o'clock, given over to huge motor trucks. Lincoln Highway none too wide, either. Slow progress. Steady! Passing truck, our off wheels take shallow ditch. Heavy list. Young companion goes astern, porting helm, and car resumes track. We speed on.

Leaving young companion to be pilot and tactician, reflect upon theory that facility of transport implies extension of culture. Not applicable, so far, to truck drivers, to judge by language booming through fog. Decide facility of transport has nothing to do with it. Truckman may be poet at home. Free verse. One thing noticeable, at any rate—profanity, in the old sense, is dying out. No originality, no new imagery

⁵as an editor, Henley edited the *Scotts Observer*, 1889-1893.

nowadays. Merely bitterness and repetition. Old-time sailor or cabby could teach free-verse merchants a thing or two. Speech, like food, becoming standardized. So much per cent of benzoate of soda from here to the coast. Now, a hundred-mile run through England, and you skewer half-a-dozen juicy dialects and forty inflections, or used to. One grows pensive at thought of possible changes over there. Benzoate of soda and so forth.

Discover fleets of trucks all gone north and road running high out of fog over quadruple tracks of railroad. Admirable red-tiled roadway. Suburbs. Moon gone, but streets well lighted. Clocks say midnight. Road solitary. Good going.

And then Philadelphia: meter 110 miles. Young companion, used to straight and narrow Manhattan, admires Broad Street and contiguous ways. Stop at hotel. Ask for rooms. Full. Clerk expresses opinion: "Not a bad place to stay—if you can get in." Agree, and proceed to next hotel. Rooms vacant. Garage at corner. Bath ready. Ring for iced water. Colored gentleman, bringing same, draws bottle from hip pocket and smiles. Three dollars. Fall asleep instantly, dreaming of Father Penn atop of City Hall, drawing bottle from pocket. Nightmare! Still, old Penn had his cellar.

Reflections, lying abed next morning, watching trolley arms of cars slide past windows, ran thus—that romanticism and romance are different propositions. Romanticism grows rank and thick in soil composed of rotting traditions and dead ethics. As now. Romance is a clean, unconscious thing, attainable mostly in youth, caring not a button for tradition. For romantics the world has just been made. For romanticists the world is just going to pieces. Everything has been done, said, sung, or ended. Notice on table book pulled out of grip in hurry to get pajamas. *Treasure Island*. Begin to read. Read it every six months. Strange confession for married man of forty. Reads *Treasure Island* every six months! Not an

idolater of Stevenson, either. Hate him when he's mawkish. But this book—it evokes! Some men, some books, evoke.

There was a man, for instance—boy, rather—at school. Willy Troone. Big lump of a chap. Name sounded like adventure. Father kept coaching inn on Great North Road, out beyond Barnet. Willy wanted to go to sea. Willy went to sea, one day. Wooden chest in canvas clouts on top of cab at door. Willy in hard hat and reefer coat. Schoolmaster made speech and Willy was gone. Lying in beds in dormitories talked about Willy going to Hongkong. Fine reverberating name, evocative, romantic, Hongkong. Then forgot Willy for next Saturday's match.

Not altogether. Willy evoked still. Used to go up past his father's inn on Great North Road, a barn of a place, with big black lion on sign and cavernous arch leading to stables. Brow of hill just ahead looking northward to Scotland and great oaks. Imagine Willy in a storm in China seas, Willy having adventures with yellow girls and pagan temples. Willy becomes a myth.

Ten years go by; Willy home at old place. Myth spoiled, Willy being second mate of a liner. Week at home and then back to Liverpool to study. Willy ambitious. Extra master, which includes naval architecture and astronomy. Myth dies.

Ten years more, and Willy is about on the Great North Road again. Arrives in automobile with wife. Commander of liner. Decorated in War. Getting stout. Lives in villa built over copse used by Turpin in old days. Villa with electric light and trolleys passing end of street. Says this is the life. Home and family. Money invested in oil. Pressed on subject of adventures, says he never had any—till he got married. That, says Willy, is greatest adventure in life. Laughs.

And it's true, too, allowing for syncopations.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

The versatility of Christopher (Darlington) Morley defeats every attempt to classify him. Essayist, novelist, poet, playwright, columnist, newspaper man—he is the inimitable playboy of American letters. Even American is too narrow a term to hold him, for his cosmopolitan nature unites much that is best in British and American cultures. Born in Haverford, Pennsylvania, in 1890, and a student in Haverford College, he had the happy fortune to be chosen as a Rhodes Scholar. The three years at Oxford and sundry ramblings on the Continent confirmed the eclectic flavor of his style—a compound of Stevenson, Lamb, the Elizabethans, and all his other favorite authors, but distinguished finally by an airy, Puckish grace which is Morley's alone.

More important than qualities of style is the spirit of a robust and prodigally jovial personality which vitalizes everything that Morley writes. In the essay, the character of the author is most vividly perceived—a man of mellow, human friendliness and delightfully innocent enthusiasms: a connoisseur of living who is always eager to share with his readers the thrilling adventures of an inquiring mind in this curious and charming and sometimes baffling world.

—Especially baffling. In many of his essays, and signally in those deliberately and finely wrought novels of mystification, *Where the Blue Begins* (1922) and *Thunder on the Left* (1925), Morley turns philosopher and starts many an elusive hare from the covert of his speculations. But he seldom follows the quarry to an end. To his readers he delicately indicates the turnings and doublings of the pursuit and then leaves them to take up the chase. In the tantalizing strategy of suggestion Morley is a master. He delights in luring his readers as far as he dares before he leaves them to their own devices. In "The Outside Edge," the essay reprinted here from "The Bowling Green," his column in *The Saturday Review of Literature*, he explains his theory of art beyond the need of further commentary. For he is himself an artist "who lives (at any rate part of the time) by agitating people with unbearable doubts and intolerable intimations of glory."

Of his forty books, some of the collections of essays are *Shandygaff* (1918), *Mince Pie* (1919), *Pipefuls* (1920), *Tales from a Rolltop Desk* (1921), *Plum Pudding* (1921), *The Powder of Sympathy* (1923), *Inward Ho!* (1923), *Essays* (1927). He is the editor of *Modern Essays, First Series* (1921), *Second Series* (1924). His best poetry is collected in *Chimneysmoke* (1921) and *Parsons' Pleasure* (1923).

THE OUTSIDE EDGE*

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

There is a little pond in a Long Island glade; a pond that will never be again quite what it was when Mr. Gissing¹ used to go sailing on it and thought it was the ocean, for now houses are building near it. But it is a pond that has done a good deal of thinking, and there seem to be in it not merely tadpoles but other slipperies just as interesting as tadpoles, shoals of small analogies and parables. There is a big willow tree that sprawls prostrate over one end of the pool and has all the appearance of being dead and naked; yet always in the juicy season it has many green things to say for itself.

Just now the pond is a smooth shield of ice, and while children scuttle about on bendy ankles and accumulate small shocks at the snub end of their spines (this makes them grow, you tell them) you may choose a clear alcove and practice the new skates. One who has, ever since boyhood, used only hockey skates, and now abandons them for a pair of the more fanciful sort (with curly Dutch ends) finds he has to learn all over again. Hockey skates are worthless except for straight-away speeding and sliding; and how pleasant it is to find that on these new curved runners one can, no matter how clumsily, swing to and fro in arcs and spirals. But, as I say, it requires learning anew; it requires a fresh notion and theory of the business of skating; a quite different balance and purpose. But learning all over again is the life-job of the artist, and he who never attempts it is damned.

It is an extraordinary excitement, even for the duffer who has never done more than coast about on hockey skates, to

*From *The Saturday Review of Literature*, February 6, 1926. Reprinted by permission of the author.

¹Mr. Gissing, the dog who is the principal character in Mr. Morley's fantastic novel, *Where the Blue Begins*.

learn that on the new runners he can lean over on the outside edge and find himself miraculously carried round on one foot in a happy spiral. The cunning steel, once you have learned to confide upon it, does not slither but cuts clean and true; the children are too occupied in their own equilibrations to make merry over your tentative antics, your experiments with the spare leg. It requires recklessness to catch just the proper lean and poise; the gesture is obviously impossible, and yet, now and then, it succeeds. You get discouraged, of course; you go home presently on flat, weary feet, and think it over. And in the three books that you pick up, that evening, you are reassured to find that your private and silly little analogy about the Outside Edge is abundantly confirmed. In literature and in art and in everything else, I suppose, it isn't until you get off the flat-runnered hockey skates and lean over on insupportable nothing that you begin to feel the authentic ecstasy and pang. The people, for instance, who squabble about whether the Ten Commandments should be taught in schools have never taken off their hockey skates. Was there ever a more delicious episode than that of the lady who objected to the inculcation of Thou Shalt Not Kill among the urchins of New York City? It is pacifist propaganda, she said. She will never say truer word. And the reason is obvious why bishops and statesmen and trustees and editors and managing people of all sorts wear glittering hockey skates. They have to speed with extreme rapidity over very thin ice. They earn their living by keeping people contented and as far as possible preventing awkward questions. But the artist, who lives (at any rate part of the time) by agitating people with unbearable doubts and intolerable intimations of glory, cannot be satisfied with those long straightforward strokes. He must choose some clear corner and practice his perilous grapevine pattern. It is for him as it was for Marlow in *Lord Jim*—

It seemed to me I was being made to comprehend the Inconceivable—and I know of nothing to compare with the discomfort of such a sen-

sation. I was made to look at the convention that lurks in all truth and on the essential sincerity of falsehood. He appealed to all sides at once—to the side turned perpetually to the light of day, and to that side of us which, like the other hemisphere of the moon, exists stealthily in perpetual darkness, with only a fearful ashy light falling at times on the edge . . . as if the obscure truth involved were momentous enough to affect mankind's conception of itself.

There, you see, is Conrad leaning over pretty far on the outside edge. There are no hockey skates on *his* feet when he's telling a story. I know people who have read, several times, the first hundred or so pages of *Lord Jim* and have never got any farther because they found, having minds active for analogy, as much to think about as they could carry. The book, you see, like almost every other exciting book, runs into theology; and Lord Jim himself is an interesting symbol of almost everyone who (with the most honorable motives, obviously) hastens to embark in his lifeboat of some creed or set of commandments and leave the shipload of pilgrims to its own fate. Even the French gunboat that eventually rescued the *Patna*, you remember, had two quartermasters ready with axes to cut the towing-hawser in case she began to go down . . . It is the readiness of theologians to be first in the lifeboats, the intellectual lifeboats, of course, that causes so many nowadays to cry "What can I do *not* to be saved?" Rightly does Marlow say, in that thoroughly dreadful book,

It was solemn, and a little ridiculous, too, as they always are, those struggles of an individual trying to save from the fire his idea of what his moral identity should be, this precious notion of a convention, only one of the rules of the game, nothing more, but all the same so terribly effective by its assumption of unlimited power over natural instincts, by the awful penalty of its failure.

When the artist leans surely enough on the outside edge, the steel cuts its ringing and perfect curve. It may not be easy for us to say precisely what he "means"; for instance, it is exhilarating to find the dramatic critics somewhat incoherent in their comments on Franz Werfel's amazing *Goat Song*, which

the always audacious Theater Guild has produced. I have not seen the play, but I've read it (it has just been published in a paper-bound copy) and find it thrilling. What does it "mean"? But what does *Hamlet* mean? I don't know that anyone ever attempted a *précis*, and it never occurred to me before even to wonder. For when an artist is skating like that, leaning far over on the intangible, the reader's secret comprehensions and anxious intuitions rise up to meet and support him, just as the shifting slopes and poises of balance keep the steel runner curving on its graving arc. When the young student in *Goat Song*, suggested to be a son of Pan, says "Perhaps I've only had one joy in all my life, the time I saw a forest burn," it may sound senseless, but the poet knows instantly what he intends. So, throughout that strange orgiastic play, Werfel speaks to something which is deeper than any of man's catchwords. When critics tell you that they don't know what a thing means, sometimes it is because they know perfectly well but don't believe it mannerly to tell. And that, I repeat, is what poets are for: to frighten us, literally, out of our everyday wits; to make us look at the dog on the hearthrug and wonder if he is wiser than we.

Nor is the poet, when he skates on the outside edge, always terrifying or cruel. It may be such winsome and adorable stuff as Elizabeth Mackinstry has given us in a book I have seen too little praised—*Puck in Pasture*, a collection of goblin poems written and illustrated by one who has the true pixie spirit. It is an ideal book to brood upon on a snowy evening when the fire burns low, when the naked trees show their dark crisscross against the dull moon-hazed sky, when the mouse fleets back to the pot-cupboard and the dog sighs on the rug. At such moments solitude seems no longer shameful; your own uneasiness as you prowls restlessly about proves that the elfin world is near. If you sleep it will be to dream fearfully, perhaps; and to startle happily back into the customary world and learn how comfortable (after all!) it is. You have been skating on the Outside Edge.

J. MIDDLETON MURRY

John Middleton Murry, editor and critical essayist, was born in London in 1889, and educated at Christ's Hospital and Brasenose College, Oxford. His marriage to Katherine Mansfield, a remarkable short-story writer, in 1912, and his friendship with D. H. Lawrence, novelist and poet, dating from the same year, have been, in his own opinion, the most important definable influences upon his style and thought.

His writing career began on the *Westminster Gazette*, of which he soon became art critic. During the War he served in the Political Intelligence Department of the British War Office, and in 1919 was Chief Censor. In the latter year he became editor of *The Athenaeum*; since 1921 he has been editor of *The Adelphi*.

The list of his books follows: *Fyodor Dostoevsky* (1917), *Still Life* (1917), *The Evolution of an Intellectual* (1919), *Aspects of Literature* (1920), *Countries of the Mind* (1921), *The Things We Are* (1922), *The Problem of Style* (1922), *The Voyage* (1924), *Discoveries* (1924), *Keats and Shakespeare* (1925), *Pencillings* (1925), *Jesus, Man of Genius* (1926).

An unnamed writer says of Mr. Murry, in William Rothenstein's well-known *Twenty-Four Portraits, Second Series* (1923): "But to the majority Mr. Murry is undoubtedly above all a critic and reviewer, the analyst of style, the expositor of the Russians. If his gifts, perhaps most obviously brilliant in this sphere, must be hinted at in one sentence, one might guess that his special achievement is to have combined all that subtlety and delicacy of analysis which modern psychology has put at the critic's disposal with, and here lies his uniqueness, that strength and authority which their as-yet-unchallenged standard of values gave to the older critics."

THE COURAGE OF CRITICISM*

J. MIDDLETON MURRY

One of the hardest things for a critic to do is to present an unbiased mind to a new book. That is the critic's private concern, some may say, shying instantly at the unpopular word, and he were best to keep it to himself. But criticism is not a highly specialized profession like medicine or the law. Every reader is a potential critic, and in so far as he reads well, an actual one. Some people try to communicate and impose their critical opinions—a pursuit which is a branch of the art of literature; these are the professional critics—if you like, the critic *par excellence*. But it is not because they are critics that they are a race apart, but because they are or try to be artists; just as artists in the larger sense have perceptions of the same kind as those of other people, and are distinguished only by the will and power to communicate them. So that when we say that nothing is harder for the critic than to present an unbiased mind to a new book, we are not airing a professional hardship but a general disability.

The difficulty is most sensible when we come to the onerous and delightful act of passing judgment. Onerous, because in the act of judgment we are ourselves judged; delightful, because the majority of new books are not worth judging at all, and the act of judgment is the pinnacle of a rare enjoyment which is incomplete without it. By failing to judge we "blunt the fine point of seldom pleasure." A book has made a vivid impression on our minds. We lean back in our chair

*From *Pencilings*. Thomas Seltzer, Inc., 1925. Reprinted by permission of the author and the publishers.

and say to ourselves, "Now, *how* good is it really?" We have a suspicion that we may have been taken in. We are reluctant to trust ourselves, and instinctively we reach out for the staff of authority to lean upon. We obey Arnold's precept¹ and conjure up fragments of the writings that are immortal. Alas, they give no help. The new thing is not like them, simply because it is new.

Our instinct is to hedge. Yes, we say, the book made a vivid impression, but how crude is the writing! The visions are definite, but may not that be because they are soulless? Or, contrariwise, we say of a book that has appeared to us misty and stale and flat, but how beautifully *written*! The dull haze in which the characters are hidden we liken to the cloud in which the loving gods wrapped the Homeric hero; it is poetic, imaginative. The writing of the misty book is like the writing we have learned to admire; the writing of the vivid book is quite unlike it. It is not decorous and polished, it is not plaintive and musical. It makes us, now that we have escaped from its spell, vaguely uncomfortable that it should so have moved us. Perhaps—can it be (God forbid!) that we are lacking in taste?

If you have the instinct for such discriminations, you can pick up the trail of this uncertainty all through contemporary criticism. You will find the reviewer who has evidently been moved by a book shrinking away from it. Yes, it was vivid, he admits, but lacking in imagination. As though a book really could be vivid without imagination! What he is really lamenting is the absence of poeticization, of what is called "imaginative writing." He cannot get rid of the sneaking feeling that it is wrong to admire a book that does not contain it. To cast a vivid light on to reality, without mitigating mists, seems to him in spite of himself, almost cruel, even a

¹*Arnold's precept*, a reference to the following passage from Matthew Arnold's essay, "The Study of Poetry": "Indeed there can be no more useful help for discovering what poetry belongs to the class of the truly excellent . . . than to have always in one's mind lines and expressions of the great masters, and to apply them as a touchstone to other poetry."

little vulgar. But when he finds his imaginative writing again he is comfortable; he feels the presence of "art," and he is happier, or he pretends to be.

This might be called artistic snobbery, and it is truly a kind of snobbery in that the critic has not the courage to judge the book in and for itself. He is like a man in a railway carriage who, when an acquaintance enters, breaks off an interesting conversation with a shabby-looking fellow because he is afraid of the uplifted eyebrow. He cannot trust himself. Another manifestation of this same snobbery is the half-convinced ecstasy of praise which bursts forth when a book appears in the raiment of "poetry." It is a pretty safe rule to mistrust a review of any novel in which great emphasis is laid upon its poetic character.

I resist the temptation to digress on to the question of how to read reviews, and repeat that truly imaginative writing is a composite picture of all the styles which have at one time or another been given that name; and it is obviously impossible for a piece of good writing to correspond with that. And this is one of the reasons why some of the more original writers today never receive their fair share of critical attention. Superficially they do not look like literary artists, as, for instance, Mr. W. W. Jacobs² does not. But Mr. Jacobs has created a world, a little world it is true, but a world of his own. He is a much more important figure in literature than a dozen younger writers whose works are always received with respectful attention. But Mr. Jacobs is comic and popular—*snobisme oblige*. How can serious criticism deal with a figure like the Night Watchman? And there are so many cases like his, of writers who do their business unobtrusively, without pretension, who never air their views on literature at large or the future of the novel, and for their modesty are never taken into consideration, that at times we have the unpleasant

²W. W. Jacobs, a British short-story writer, many of whose characters are taken from the wharves and coasting ships.

feeling that a hundred years hence criticism may appear to have been as wide of the mark as the critics of a hundred years ago to us now.

Perhaps it all comes to this—that we are too conscientious, too Puritan. We can with difficulty persuade ourselves that a book we enjoy can really be a good one. So flowery a path should lead not to happiness but to the everlasting bonfire. And yet, good heavens, how enjoyable good literature is! When we look back, it is the sense and memory of delight, golden delight, which most potently remains. Does any one forget when he first plunged away from the familiar paths in Chaucer and entered on *Troilus and Cressida*? What a divine draft was that! And *Much Ado* and *Comus* and *Emma*! Every masterpiece is a fountain of sheer delight, grave delight in the *Purgatorio* and *King Lear*, gay delight in *Don Quixote* and *Henry IV*, but forever delight. So it has always been; it must be so still.

HENRY W. NEVINSON

Rarely has a single life had so much sheer living crowded into it as the life of Henry Woodd Nevinston, veteran British journalist and uncompromising Liberal. The record of his activities since 1897, when he first attained prominence as a war correspondent, occupies, in *Who's Who*, fully a column of close-packed information.

He was born at Leicester, England, in 1856, and was brought up in a commonplace country environment by narrow and intolerant parents. At Shrewsbury School he learned to love Greek, but at Christ Church, Oxford, he found little happiness and made a poor record.

Under the influence of Carlyle he then went, as he writes, "to look for God in Germany." After sojourns in Weimar and Jena, he returned to England to become a teacher at Toynbee Hall, a pioneer settlement house in the London slums. Between 1885 and 1891 he was lecturing in a secondary school, but, detesting teaching and fearing to plunge into writing, he was aimless and wretched. Eventually, however, he found himself reporting for London newspapers.

In 1897 he became a leader writer on the *Daily Chronicle*, and went to Crete as correspondent in the Greco-Turkish War; the following year he was in Spain. From 1899 to 1902 he reported the Boer War in Natal and the Transvaal. In 1903 he acted as representative of the Macedonian Relief Committee. During 1904 and 1905 he visited Central Africa and was instrumental in exposing the Portuguese slave trade. From there he jumped to Russia and saw the street fighting of the first revolution in Moscow in 1906; he was appointed to bear the English Address to the President of the first Duma, and later visited the Caucasus and the devastated provinces of Georgia.

In 1907-1908 the *Manchester Guardian* sent him to India. In 1909 he was at Barcelona during an outbreak, and reported the Spanish campaign in Morocco for the *Daily News*. As a correspondent for the *Daily Chronicle* he went to Bulgaria in 1912, to Albania in 1913.

August, 1914, found him in Berlin as a *Daily News* correspondent; in the next few months he covered the western front and helped organize a Friends' Ambulance Unit. The following year, as corre-

spondent for the *Manchester Guardian*, he accompanied the British Army to the Dardanelles, and was wounded at Scimitar Hill, Gallipoli; he described the Salonika and Egyptian campaigns of 1916 and the post-war France and Germany of 1918-1919.

He reported the Washington Disarmament Conference in 1921-1922 for the *Guardian*; "reluctantly declined" Amundsen's invitation to fly over the North Pole in 1925; and went to Syria and Palestine for the *Guardian* in 1926.

Between excursions and alarms he has found time to champion Irish freedom, women's suffrage, London slum reform, justice for India, the liberation of Black Africa from the white man's exploitation, the release of European nationalities, and the British Labor movement—a record for the most part of victorious causes. These causes he advocated through his association with the liberal London *Nation* from 1907 until 1923, when H. W. Massingham, its famous editor, resigned, and the journal changed its policy.

Also he has found time to publish the story of his extraordinary career in two volumes, *Changes and Chances* (1923) and *More Changes, More Chances* (1925), and the following volumes of essays: *Books and Personalities* (1905), *Essays in Freedom* (1909), *The Growth of Freedom* (1912), *Essays in Rebellion* (1913), *Essays in Freedom and Rebellion* (1921).

An amazing, Odyssean life it has been, and the best part of it is that Mr. Nevinson has never lost, in the swift onrush of action, the ability to see clearly and think nobly. "No one has ever seen doubt or hesitation in Nevinson," says S. K. Ratcliffe, a fellow journalist. "For him there is only one faith—the faith in human freedom, with its corollary, the hatred of cruelty and injustice wherever disclosed."

*all these things with
and together to show
what a new life is like
Reflected in the
Communal style*

A FAREWELL TO FLEET STREET*

HENRY W. NEVINSON

It is still early, but dinner is over—not the club dinner with its buzzing conversation, nor yet the restaurant dinner, hurried into the ten minutes between someone's momentous speech and the leader¹ that has to be written on it. The suburban dinner is over, and there was no need to hurry. They tell me I shall be healthier now. What do I care about being healthier?

primary necessity
Shall I sit with a novel over the fire? Shall I take life at second hand and work up an interest in imaginary loves and the exigencies of shadows? What are all the firesides and fictions of the world to me that I should loiter here and doze, doze, as good as die?

They tell me it is a fine thing to take a little walk before bedtime. I go out into the suburban street. A thin, wet mist hangs over the silent and monotonous houses, and blurs the electric lamps along our road. There will be a fog in Fleet Street² tonight, but everyone is too busy to notice it. How friendly a fog made us all! How jolly it was that night when I ran straight into a *Chronicle* man, and got a lead of him by a short head over the same curse! There's no chance of running into anyone here, let alone cursing! A few figures slouch past and disappear; the last postman goes his round, knocking at one house in ten; up and down the asphalt path leading into the obscurity of the Common a wretched woman wanders in vain; the long, pointed windows of a chapel glimmer with yellowish light through the dingy air, and I hear the faint groans of a harmonium cheering the people dismally home.

*From *Essays in Freedom and Rebellion*. Yale University Press, 1921. Reprinted by permission of the author and the publishers.

¹leader, leading editorial article.

²Fleet Street, the district in which the principal newspaper offices of London are located.

The groaning ceases, the lights go out, service is over; it will soon be time for decent people to be in bed.

In Fleet Street the telegrams will now be falling thick as—no, I won't say it! No Vallombrosa for me, nor any other journalistic tag!³ I remember once a young sub-editor had got as far as, "The cry is still . . ." when I took him by the throat. I have done the State some service.

Our sub-editors' room is humming now—a low murmur of questions, rapid orders, the rustle of paper, the quick alarum of telephones. Boys keep bringing telegrams in orange envelopes. Each sub-editor is bent over his little lot of news. One sorts out the speeches from bundles of flimsy. The middle of Lloyd George's speech has got mixed up with Balfour's peroration. If he left them mixed, would anyone be the less wise? Perhaps the speakers might notice it, and that man from Wiltshire would be sure to write saying he had always supported Mr. Balfour, and heartily welcomed this fresh evidence of his consistency.

"Six columns of speeches in already; how much?" asks the sub-editor. "Column and quarter," comes answer from the head of the table, and the cutting begins. Another sub-editor pieces together an interview about the approaching comet. "Keep comet to three sticks," comes the order, and the comet's perihelion⁴ is abbreviated. Another guts a bluebook on prison statistics as savagely as though he were disemboweling the whole criminal population.

There's the telephone ringing. "Hullo, hullo!" calls a sub-editor quietly. "Who are you? Margate mystery? Go ahead. They've found the corpse? All right. Keep it to a column, but send good story. Horrible mutilations? Good. Glimpse the corpse yourself if you can. Yes. Send full mutilations. Will call for them at eleven. Good-by." "You doing the Archbishop, Mr. Jones?" asks the head of the table.

³journalistic tags, "Thick as autumnal leaves that strow the brooks in Vallombrosa"—*Paradise Lost*, I, 302; "*The cry*," "*The cry is still, 'They come'*"—*Macbeth*, V, v, 2.

⁴perihelion, that point in a comet's orbit at which it is nearest to the sun.

"Cup-tie⁵ at Sunderland," answers Mr. Jones, and all the time the boys go in and out with those orange-colored bulletins of the world's health.

What's a man to do at night out here? Let's have a look at all these posters displayed in front of the Free Library, where a few poor creatures are still reading last night's news for the warmth. Next week there's a concert of chamber-music in the Town Hall. I suppose I might go to that, just to "kill time," as they say. Think of a journalist wanting to kill time! Or to kill anything but another fellow's "stuff," and sometimes an editor! Then there's a boxing competition at the St. John's Arms, and a subscription dance in the Nelson Rooms, and a lecture on Dante, with illustrations from contemporary art, for working men and women, at the Institute. Also there's something called the Why-Be-Lonesome Club for promoting friendly social intercourse among the young and old of all classes. I suppose I might go to that, too. It sounds comprehensive.

There seems no need to be dull in the suburbs. A man in a cart is still crying coke down the street. Another desires to sell clothesprops. A brace of lovers come stealing out of the Common through the mist, careless of mud and soaking grass. I suppose people would say I'm too old to make love on a County Council bench. In love's cashbooks the balance sheet of years is kept with remorseless accuracy.

The foreign editors are waiting now in their silent room, and the telegrams come to them from the ends of the world. They fold them in packets together by countries or continents—the Indian stuff, the Russian stuff, the Egyptian, Balkan, Austrian, South African, Persian, Japanese, American, Spanish, and all the rest. They'll have pretty nearly seven columns by this time, and the order will come "Two-and-a-half foreign." Then the piecing and cutting will begin. One of them sits in

⁵*cup-tie*, a contest (presumably, here, cricket) between the victors in previous contests played for a cup.

a telephone box with bands across his head, and repeats a message from our Paris correspondent. Through our Paris man we can talk with Berlin and Rome.

From this rising ground I can see the light of the city reflected on the misty air, and somewhere mingled in that light are the big lamps down in Fleet Street. The City's voice comes to me like a confused murmur through a telephone when the words are unintelligible. The only distinct sounds are the dripping of the moisture from the trees in suburban gardens, and the voice of an old lady imploring her pet dog to return from his evening walk.

✓ The voice of all the world is now heard in that silent room. From moment to moment news is coming of treaties and revolutions, of sultans deposed and kings enthroned, of commerce and failures, of shipwrecks, earthquakes, and explorations, of wars and flooded camps and sieges, of intrigue, diplomacy, and assassination, of love, murder, revenge, and all the public joy and sorrow and business of mankind. All the voices of fear, hope, and lamentation echo in that silent little room; and maps hang on the walls, and guidebooks are always ready, for who knows where the next event may come to pass upon this energetic little earth, already twisting for a hundred million years around the sun?

The editor must be back by now. Calm and decisive, he takes his seat in his own room, like the conductor of an orchestra preparing to raise his baton now that the tuning-up is finished. The leader-writers are coming in for their instructions. No need for much consultation tonight—not for the first leader anyhow. For the second—well, there are a good many things one could suggest: Turkey or Persia or the eternal German Dreadnaught⁶ for a foreign subject; the stage censorship or the price of cotton; and the cup-ties, or the extinction of hats for both sexes as a light note to finish with. He's always laboring to invent "something light," is the editor. He

⁶*eternal German Dreadnaught*, written during the World War.

says we must sometimes consider the public; just as though we wrote the rest of the paper for our own private fun.

But there's no doubt about the first leader tonight. There's only one subject on which it would be a shock to every reader in the morning not to find it written. And, my word, what a subject it is! What seriousness and indignation and conviction one could get into it! I should begin by restating the situation. You must always assume that the reader's ignorance is new every morning, as love should be; and anyone who happens to know something about it likes to see he was right. I should work in adroit references to this evening's speeches, and that would fill the first paragraph—say, three sides⁷ of my copy, or something over. In the second paragraph I'd show the immense issues involved in the present contest, and expose the fallacies of our opponents who attempt to belittle the matter as temporary and unlikely to recur—say, three sides of my copy again, but not a word more. And, then, in the third paragraph, I'd adjure the Government, in the name of all their party holds sacred, to stand firm, and I'd appeal to the people of this great Empire never to allow their ancient liberties to be encroached upon or overridden by a set of irresponsible—well, in short, I should be like General Sherman when at the crisis of a battle he used to say, "Now, let everything go in"—four sides of my copy, or even five if the stuff is running well.

Somebody must be writing that leader now. Possibly he is doing it better than I should, but I hope not. When Hannibal wandered all those years in Asia at the court of silly Antiochus this or stupid Prusias the other, and knew that Carthage was falling to ruin while he alone might have saved her if only she had allowed him, would he have rejoiced to hear that someone else was succeeding better than himself—had traversed the Alps with a bigger army, had won a second Cannae, and even at Zama snatched a decisive victory? Hannibal might have rejoiced. He was a very exceptional man.

⁷sides, pages.

But here's a poor creature still playing the clarinet down the street, on the pretense of giving pleasure worth a penny. Yes, my boy, I know you're out of work, and that is why you play "The Last Rose of Summer" and "When Other Lips." I am out of work, too, and I can't play anything. You say you learned when a boy, and once played in the orchestra at Drury Lane; but now you've come to wandering about suburban streets, and having finished "When Other Lips," you will quite naturally play "My Lodging's on the Cold Ground." Only last night I was playing in an orchestra myself, not a hundred miles (obsolete journalistic tag!)—not a hundred miles from Drury Lane. It was a grand orchestra, that of ours. Night by night it played the symphony of the world, and each night a new symphony was performed, without rehearsal. The drums of our orchestra were the echoes of thundering wars; the flutes and soft recorders⁸ were the eloquence of an Empire's statesmen; and our cellos and violins wailed with the pity of all mankind. In that vast orchestra I played the horn that sounds the charge, or with its sharp reveille vexes the ear of night before the sun is up. Here is your penny, my brother in affliction. I, too, have once joined in the music of a star, and now wander the suburban streets.

That leader-writer has not finished yet, but the proofs of the beginning of his article will be coming down. In an hour or so his work will be over, and he will pass out into the street exhausted, but happy with the sense of function fulfilled. Fleet Street is quieter now. The lamps gleam through the fog, a motor-bus thunders by, a few late messengers flit along with the latest telegrams, and some stragglers from the restaurants come singing past the Temple. For a few moments there is silence but for the leader-writer's quick footsteps on the pavement. He is some hours in front of the morning's news, and in a few hours more half a million people will be reading what he has just written, and will quote it to each other as their

⁸recorder, an old form of flageolet.

own. How often I have had whole sentences of my stuff thrown at me as conclusive arguments almost before the printing ink was dry!

Here I stand, beside a solitary lamp-post upon a suburban acclivity. The light of the city's existence—I think my successor would say, of her pulsating and palpitating or ebullient existence—is pale upon the sky, and the murmur of her voice sounds like large but distant waves. I stand alone, and near me there is no sound but the complaint of a homeless tramp swearing at the cold as he settles down upon a bench for the night.

How I used to swear at that boy for not coming quickly enough to fetch my copy! I knew the young scoundrel's step—I knew the step of every man and boy in that office. I knew the way each of them went up and down the stairs, and coughed or whistled or spat. What knowledge dies with me now that I am gone! *Qualis artifex pereo!*⁹ But that boy—how I should love to be swearing at him now! I wonder whether he misses me? I hope he does. "It would be an assurance most dear," as an old song of exile used to say.

⁹*Qualis artifex pereo!* "What an artist dies in me."—Nero.

LLEWELYN POWYS

Born in the ancient town of Dorchester, Dorsetshire, England, in 1884, Llewelyn Powys is the youngest of four brothers, all of whom have achieved distinction in the arts. John Cowper Powys is a lecturer, novelist, and poet; T. F. Powys is a novelist; and A. R. Powys is a London architect. On their mother's side they are connected with the family of John Donne the poet, and "Johnnie of Norfolk," the cousin of the poet, William Cowper; on their father's side they are descended from Sir Thomas Powys of Northamptonshire.

Llewelyn's education began in the old-fashioned country vicarage of Montacute in Somerset and was completed at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. An attack of tuberculosis forced him to spend two years in a Swiss sanatorium, after which he went to Africa and became manager of a stock farm "up country," where he lived for five years with hyenas, leopards, lions, hippopotamuses, and elephants for neighbors. "The tropical sun," he writes, "had the effect of ridding my mind of many conventional preconceptions."

It was during a subsequent residence of five years in America that he achieved literary recognition. When he returned to England, Alyse Gregory, American critic and novelist, accompanied him as his wife.

His studies of African life are his most distinctive contribution to the literature of our time: *Ebony and Ivory* (1922), *Black Laughter* (1924). *Confessions of Two Brothers* (1916) was written in collaboration with his brother John Cowper Powys. His remaining books are *Thirteen Worthies* (1923), *Skin for Skin* (1925), autobiography, *The Verdict of Bridlegoose* (1926), literary gossip, and *Henry Hudson* (1928), biography.

"In Durance Vile" is a fugitive essay, salvaged from the pages of *The Freeman*, which shows something of the knowledge of animals which Mr. Powys gained from his African experiences.

IN DURANCE VILE*

LLEWELYN POWYS

Of all the entertainments provided for the diversion of city-dwellers, there is none more ancient than the menagerie. The same impulse which prompted the citizens of Imperial Rome to stand agape before strange fauna newly imported from Africa is responsible for the crowds which daily collect in the zoölogical gardens of New York, Berlin, London. Small wonder that it should be so! Could anything possibly be more fascinating for man, the most inquisitive of animals, than to be able to observe at close quarters and at his leisure all the multifarious and extraordinary creations which have been evoked by nature to share his existence upon the earth?

In such places, "the pathos of difference" which differentiates *homo sapiens* from all other breathing things is thrown into startling relief; and not always, be it said, is the contrast in favor of human beings. There is a certain dignity, a certain natural grace about these caged animals, which from an aesthetic point of view compares well enough with the motley, straw-hatted throngs who so nonchalantly peer and pry at them through the bars. If a lion or leopard could reason, what contempt he would surely feel for these obese, tender-skinned bipeds, denuded almost entirely of tooth and claw, whose subtle, cruel brains have rendered them the undisputed masters of the planet. How clean and fresh his own manner of life would seem in comparison with human characteristics; a manner of life altogether unassociated with that artificial litter which so inevitably accumulates about the heels of human beings whenever they gather into crowds.

*From *The Freeman*. Reprinted by permission of the author and the publishers.

Of course the contrast is most obvious when one visits the circus. At these shows, directly descended from the gladiatorial amphitheaters of ancient Rome, the advantage that attends upon the possession of an ounce more of brain-matter becomes apparent, as we watch the noblest animals dance attendance on a half-score of vulgar, pale-faced men in evening clothes. It is as though we came to review the spectacular subjection of a proud and haughty race. No antic is too ignominious for these prisoners to perform. Elephants must kneel, must lie on their sides, must raise their left hind legs, once, twice, thrice, in perfect unison. Horses must learn to trip it, with nimble hoof, to this or that minuet, and it is necessary for bears to engage, for mockery's sake, in pastimes far removed from their natural desires.

But even though the bodies of these beasts have been broken to obedience by a hundred painful contrivances, it becomes quite clear to an observant spectator, as the performance proceeds, that their intractable hearts are even yet not altogether subdued. "Look at a lion at the moment when the trainer ceases to crack his whip and turns his back. In a flash another self has possessed him—in his glance, in his furtive gesture you perceive the king of beasts once more. The sawdust of the circus has become the sand of the desert; twenty thousand years have rolled back in the twinkling of an eye."

It is true, of course, that certain animals take more kindly to such enforced humiliations than others. Seals, for example, those agile, slippery denizens of the northern seas, will gladly play at ball for hours together; and poodle dogs, also, bright degenerates of a distinguished species, will race back and forth in a veritable ecstasy of gymnastic achievement.

It is curious to observe how, even in captivity, certain animals with an almost Hebraic tenacity will follow out as far as possible their natural habits and customs. Meat, at the appointed hour, is thrown into the lion's cage. The hun-

gry animal must needs spend several minutes in licking the red joint with his rough tongue. It is as near as he can get to the practice of his progenitors who, time out of mind, as often as they killed, whether zebra, buck, or buffalo, stood drinking the hot, flowing blood before ever they tasted the flesh.

One gives a banana to a monkey. In a trice he is up and away and riding upon the highest trapeze, as it were in the topmost branches of a tree, safe from molestation. It is odd to note how monkeys more than any other animal seem to capture the imaginations of human beings. Their cages are always surrounded by crowds of astonished onlookers, whose eyes with concentrated absorption follow each of their movements. They watch the chimpanzee crying out grotesquely with trumpet lips; they stand spellbound before the orang-outangs, as they wallow upon the dusty floor.

Fortunate it is for the hippopotamuses as they enter and reënter their miserable tanks and browse on the bales of dry hay provided for them, that they are incapable of remembering the lovely inland lakes where they once lolled and basked in freedom. Never again will they walk upon the bottom of deep, lukewarm pools, never again will they feel the hot, tropical sunshine beating down upon swamps where the green rushes grow, oozing and pressed flat by the weight of their enormous feet. Yet in the silence of the night, when the crowds have gone and the moonlight slants down upon the dark floor of their restricted dwelling-place, can it really be possible that their dull, flat, ugly skulls contain no recollection whatever of the long moonlight excursions they were wont to take across the dew-drenched African veldt¹ under Scorpio and the Southern Cross?²

Undoubtedly it is the birds that are happiest in captivity. What a relief it is to enter the aviary! Here, at last, it is possible to forget the look in that tiger's eye as with padded

¹*veldt*, grass country, open, with little or no forest.

²*Scorpio and the Southern Cross*, constellations seen in the Southern hemisphere.

paw he paced, up and down, and to and fro, against the bars. There is a frivolous superficiality about these winged vertebrates, their crested heads seem incapable of harboring somber thoughts. Land birds and water birds alike, they scream and chatter and flit, now here, now there. It suffices them if they can display their painted plumage, dabble their beaks in a pan of water, and peck at seeds.

The reptiles are at ease for other reasons. As long as they are allowed to lie somnolent for hours together, they make no demands upon life. Nothing, indeed, in the whole world can present the illusion of quietude, of absolute stillness, as does a group of knotty, dragon-backed crocodiles. It is exactly as though, as they lie together head upon back, some magician had changed them into lifeless stone; as though they had suddenly become petrified and would remain so throughout all eternity.

If there be any man who has it in him, because of a too long sojourn amidst the commonplace manifestations of city life, to question the unconfined nature of the Creator's imagination, let him once more visit a zoölogical garden. What fabulous extravagance of conception, what fantastic ingenuity, what delicate craft, will be presented to his wondering eyes! Could the wildest dream of a modern artist have designed, for example, so bizarre an animal as a giraffe, with its elongated telegraph-pole of a neck, with its pard-like hide, and docile eyes? Or what genius would have dared to crown the nose or a rhinoceros with a horn, or, for that matter, stretch out the nostrils of an elephant to a length which if not ludicrous and unseemly is to say the least of it, unexpected?

J. B. PRIESTLEY

John Boynton Priestley, the son of a schoolmaster, was born in 1894 at Bradford, England, and attended college at Trinity Hall, Cambridge. Throughout the War he served with the Duke of Wellington's regiment and the Devon regiment.

He lives the life of a scholarly man of letters at his home near Oxford, indulging in "amateur philosophizing, music, and the less responsible games."

His essays are, for the most part, critical studies of his contemporaries in literature. As a reviewer he combines capable judgment with a lively and well-turned style. His *Figures in Modern Literature* (1924) is an illuminating series of portraits. In 1925 he published *English Comic Characters* and in 1926 contributed *George Meredith* to the "English Men of Letters" series. Collections of his miscellaneous essays and reviews include: *Brief Diversions* (1922), *Papers from Lilliput* (1922), *I for One* (1923), and *Open House, A Book of Essays* (1927).

ON VULGAR OPTIMISTS*

J. B. PRIESTLEY

There is a certain kind of optimism that is easily the most depressing thing in the world. To meet one who professes it, one who may fairly be called a vulgar optimist (for this kind of optimism is vulgar), is to long for the sweet consolations of Leopardi and Schopenhauer¹ and the blithe despair of the "Shropshire Lad." Who does not know and shrink from that metallic and inflexible cheerfulness, that brutal determination to make what is very absurdly called "the best" of everything, which mark such optimism and set it apart from all reasonable attitudes toward life? Its unmistakable vulgarity, the sign of it everywhere, is easily discovered in its favorite aphorism on the subject of dark clouds and silver linings. There is nothing more beautiful, in their own season, than dark clouds, and no man with a healthy mind—and a healthy mind is a poetical mind—has failed to be strangely exalted, uplifted in spirit, at some time or other at the sight of these somber masses and fantastic shapes which for a few brief moments can transform the whole world into a battlement of Elsinore;² yet this vulgar optimist, like some importunate bagman,³ must come bustling in with his talk of silver linings. He cannot be content with having his pockets and coffers lined with silver, he must line the night sky as well, and all with the same cold, glittering stuff. He lives in a brummagem⁴ uni-

*From *I for One*. John Lane, 1923. Reprinted by permission of the author and the publishers.

¹*Leopardi and Schopenhauer*, Count Giacomo Leopardi (1798-1837), an Italian poet, and Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), a German philosopher, both of whose writings are dominated by pessimism; the "*Shropshire Lad*," A. E. Housman, in whose collection of poems, *A Shropshire Lad*, the sense of death is felt behind the happiest passages.

²a battlement of Elsinore. See *Hamlet*, I, i.

³bagman, traveling salesman.

⁴brummagem, shoddy, showy—alluding to the cheap plated goods made in Birmingham, England.

verse, silver-lined and silver-plated. What does he know of that wise melancholy which is the familiar companion of all good men and true thinkers? He presses all the world and the sun, moon, and stars into the service of maintaining his fixed grin, and he can wring bright conclusions from twilight and the moaning sea, from old, unhappy songs and the pitiful remembrance of first love. For him the strings are muted in vain; he will have nothing but the loud trombone. Now that he and his fellows have swarmed into pulpits and newspaper offices, the whole population is steadily sinking into a deep fit of depression. He it is who is responsible for all these cheery messages and bright services and talks we hear so much about at the present time. Is there anything more hateful than a bright talk?

This vulgar strain of optimism may affect a man's ordinary manners and talk, or his opinions, his philosophy of life, or it may affect them all. In their manner, a great many parsons are optimists of this kind, though they are not so much vulgar as morbid, the victims of a curious sort of nervous disorder. A good deal of the current prejudice against clergymen has nothing at all to do with their religion, their opinions in general, their peculiar functions; it is simply the result of a distaste for the manner they affect in ordinary society. Many of them have a suspicion that their ministrations are not wanted, and as they are compelled to meet all kinds of people who may possibly be hostile, and are anxious to carry it off bravely and prove that they are good fellows and men of the world, they finally adopt a manner that irritates every sensible person they meet. Their grimly determined cheerfulness and hectic goodfellowship are appalling. They drench the world in rose-water. Never will they permit the faintest shadow to cross their faces; they will not be serious for a single moment, but will break into loud, though distinctly nervous, guffaws at every turn. They appear to exist in a universe designed by the editor of *Punch*, and by their kettle-drum counsels of

good cheer drive even children toward a bleak but less depressing agnosticism. In America, where extremes flourish, the popular preachers and orators seem to have reached such a frenzy of vulgar and intolerable optimism that perhaps nothing but the re-introduction of gin into the country will save its millions from idiocy. There, a mechanical cheerfulness, the result of nothing but astigmatism and insensitiveness, passes for the very height of wisdom. To read Dr. Samuel Johnson, who meditated and wrote much on the vanity of human wishes, is to be heartened to face the inevitable ills of life; but to read Dr. Frank Crane, who screams into millions of ears every day that everything is for the best and that nothing can go wrong, is to be depressed beyond belief, to be dazed and deafened by the brass band of cheap optimism.

The men who are forever slapping one on the back and saying that everything will come right are bad enough, but more intolerable are those persons who will persist in slapping humanity itself on the back and regarding all life with an unchanging grin of approval. We have not had so many of these vulgarly optimistic philosophers among us of late, but their influence is still felt in the opinion of our time. There are not more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in their philosophy, because, in the first place, their philosophy does not dream. Stupidity, downright insensitiveness, is the secret of such optimism, which fits as much as it can of life into its bright little boxes and blandly ignores the rest. It is at its worst when it is based upon a creed of mechanical progress, believing that humanity can be saved by its comforts and conveniences. Who does not know the man who, in his heart of hearts, is convinced that the fact of twenty-five pins being sold for one halfpenny is a blow at, say, the doctrine of original sin? Or him who can now ignore the "still, sad music of humanity," simply because the voice of Mr. George Robey⁵ can be heard at both Dundee and Gloucester in the same

⁵Mr. George Robey, a music-hall performer.

evening? Or those who prefer to concentrate upon the future, and believe that once all rooms are built without corners and electric light is found in every village, desire shall not fail and the mourners shall go about the streets no more? It is such thinkers as these who—to borrow once more the words of their greatest enemy, the Preacher—come in with vanity and depart in darkness, and whose names shall be covered with darkness.

The reason why such shallow optimism always succeeds in depressing us is that blindness, stupidity, and insensitive-ness are always depressing. It is plain to us that those who profess it are living in a world of their own, a much smaller world than ours, a world without atmosphere, and therefore without either sunlight or shadows, and so their words mean little or nothing to us. They are denied both tears and laughter and much of what we call poetry. Shelley, with his belief in human perfectibility and his beautiful anarchy, was an optimist if ever was one, but he is neither vulgar nor depressing, simply because he sings and does not speak, sings out of a vision; he gives us not thought, but the intoxication that thought always induced in him, and it is for this noble intoxication that we treasure him. He is everybody's adolescence, or at least the nobler part of it, transmuted into song. Thanks to his untimely death, we see him and his work forever in the golden haze of his youth and panther-like beauty, and we ask for nothing better. What we should have thought of a fat, spectacled, middle-aged Shelley still uttering the same sentiments is another matter. In the meantime, we go to him neither for wisdom nor for consolation, but in moments of great stress turn rather to that plain, long-nosed gentleman⁶ who lounged about the shores of Grasmere, even though we do not care a snap of our fingers for his moral cottagers and celandines. Another great poet, Browning, was an optimist, but was saved by his passion and dramatic genius from the

⁶that plain, long-nosed gentleman, William Wordsworth.

vulgar strain, though even he came dangerously near it at times. Tennyson spent sixty years trying to become a vulgar optimist, but fortunately for us he could never destroy (though he could cheapen) his natural dreamy melancholy, and now when his voice returns to us it is mournfully declaiming such things as—

The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:

The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs; the deep

Moans round with many voices. . . .

*Priests are in a
a light conclusion from it*

There are a number of great men of letters, and they are, on the whole, those with whom we spend the most of our time, whose attitude, not to be lightly labeled either optimistic or pessimistic, seems to be the right one; they are neither intoxicated youths, clothing the world in their bright dreams, nor bitter hobbledahoys, cursing the world for their own awkwardness and bad manners, but grown men, ripe, experienced, knowing the worst, but still smiling, a little sadly sometimes, but smiling. There are Shakespeare among the poets, Fielding and Thackeray among the novelists, Lamb among the essayists, and Johnson among—shall I say—the literary figures; and when I remember what they have known, drudgery, poverty, and disease, mad sisters, and young wives dead or insane, and all the smaller ills of life besides; when I remember these things and read their work, noting their humor and pathos, their flashes of indignation, their wise wonder, their lasting kindliness, I understand how life, that is neither rosewater nor bitter aloes, should be approached. There is about all such men a certain sweet melancholy, as far from the studied gloom of the pessimist as it is from the metallic cheerfulness of the optimist, that pervades their work rather than finds direct expression in it; a sweet melancholy that is an air, an atmosphere, a background to their laughter and junketing; a vague curtain before which the little things of this life appear small and bright, pitiful and lovely,

an expression that steals over their faces when the fighting and clowning and feasting are done with, and they think they are unnoticed. So it is, I fancy, with all good and wise men, except those who are prophets and mystics. So it is not with the vulgar optimists, who have never meditated upon vanity and have no values. They stand crowing in the darkness, and they will never raise our spirits until they have depressed their own.

Personality revealed - if not only a

1. *perhaps happy medium*

2. *Reveals great joyfulness*

a) *find gem*

b) *bring you into depth - effort*

c) *the exploration, re. where things*

d) *the fact of*

e) *the fact of*

f) *the fact of*

g) *the fact of*

h) *the fact of*

i) *the fact of*

j) *the fact of*

k) *the fact of*

l) *the fact of*

BERTRAND RUSSELL

If a philosopher is one who synthesizes knowledge and gives it shape and direction, it would be hard to find among our contemporaries a truer philosopher than Bertrand Russell. For he unites, in his singularly comprehensive intellect, a knowledge of subjects as diverse as science, government, economics, education, and religion; and all of these, clarified by his rationalism and sharpened by his wit, he has made the matter of his writings. Besides technical books (for he is, first of all, a mathematician and collaborated with Dr. Whitehead in *Principia Mathematica*—1910) he has written popular explanations of recent scientific discoveries, *The A B C of Atoms* (1923), *The A B C of Relativity* (1925); studies of economics, *The Prospects of Industrial Civilization*—with Dora Russell (1923); books on behalf of socialism and internationalism, *Why Men Fight* (1916), *Proposed Roads to Freedom* (1918), *The Problem of China* (1922); *Icarus, or the Future of Science* (1924); *Education and the Good Life* (1926); and purely philosophical speculations, *Mysticism and Logic* (1918), *What I Believe* (1925). Whatever the subject, Russell fits it into the whole scheme of his thought and shapes it to his valiant liberalism. Heir to a peerage, he is heir also to the traditions of his grandfather, Lord John Russell, Prime Minister and political reformer.

Bertrand (Arthur William) Russell was born in 1872 at Trelleck, Monmouthshire, England. He attended Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was afterwards a Fellow and a Lecturer in mathematical logic. He visited this country in 1914 as exchange professor at Harvard, and in 1924 as a public lecturer. Visits to China and to Soviet Russia have contributed to the development of his social theories.

In the writings of Bertrand Russell there is frequently evident an attitude toward the future of Western civilization which some readers have mistaken for pessimism. But if Mr. Russell sees with painful clearness the perils which beset us, he sees, too, the challenge to overcome those perils, so that his social philosophy is actually constructive. Such is the spirit of the following passage from *Roads to Freedom*: "The world that we must seek is a world in which the creative spirit is alive, in which life is an adventure full of joy and hope, based rather upon the impulse to construct than upon the desire to retain what we possess or to seize what is possessed by others."

EDUCATION AS A POLITICAL INSTITUTION*

BERTRAND RUSSELL

No political theory is adequate unless it is applicable to children as well as to men and women. Theorists are mostly childless, or, if they have children, they are carefully screened from the disturbances which would be caused by youthful turmoil. Some of them have written books on education, but without, as a rule, having any actual children present to their minds while they wrote. Those educational theorists who have had a knowledge of children, such as the inventors of kindergarten and the Montessori system, have not always had enough realization of the ultimate goal of education to be able to deal successfully with advanced instruction. I have not the knowledge¹ either of children or of education which would enable me to supply whatever defects there may be in the writings of others. But some questions concerning education as a political institution are involved in any hope of social reconstruction, and are not usually considered by writers on educational theory. These questions, only, I wish to discuss.

The power of education in forming character and opinion is very great and very generally recognized. The genuine beliefs, though not usually the professed precepts, of parents and teachers are almost unconsciously acquired by most children; and even if they depart from these beliefs in later life, something of them remains deeply implanted, ready to emerge in a time of stress or crisis. Education is, as a rule, the strongest force on the side of what exists and against fundamental change; threatened institutions, while they are still powerful, possess themselves of the educational machine, and instill a respect for

*From *Why Men Fight*. The Century Company, 1917. Reprinted by permission of the author and the publishers.

¹I have not the knowledge Since this was written, Mr. Russell has acquired, as the father of two children, experience in educational practice which he has embodied in *Education and the Good Life* (1926).

their own excellence into the malleable minds of the young. Reformers retort by trying to oust their opponents from their position of vantage. The children themselves are not considered by either party; they are merely so much material to be recruited into one army or the other. If the children themselves were considered, education would not aim at making them belong to this party or that, but at enabling them to choose intelligently between the parties; it would aim at making them able to think, not at making them think what their teachers think. Education as a political weapon could not exist if we respected the rights of children. If we respected the rights of children, we should educate them so as to give them the knowledge and the mental habits required for forming independent opinions; but education as a political institution endeavors to form habits and to circumscribe knowledge in such a way as to make one set of opinions inevitable.

The two principles of *justice* and *liberty*, which cover a very great deal of the social reconstruction required, are not by themselves sufficient where education is concerned. Justice, in the literal sense of equal rights, is obviously not wholly possible as regards children. And as for liberty, it is, to begin with, essentially negative: it condemns all avoidable interference with freedom, without giving a positive principle of construction. But education is essentially constructive and requires some positive conception of what constitutes a good life. And although liberty is to be respected in education as much as is compatible with instruction, and although a very great deal more liberty than is customary can be allowed without loss to instruction, yet it is clear that some departure from complete liberty is unavoidable if children are to be taught anything, except in the case of unusually intelligent children who are kept isolated from more normal companions. This is one reason for the great responsibility which rests upon teachers; the children must, necessarily, be more or less at the mercy of their elders, and cannot make themselves the guardians of their own in-

terests. Authority in education is to some extent unavoidable, and those who educate have to find a way of exercising authority in accordance with the *spirit* of liberty.

Where authority is unavoidable, what is needed is *reverence*. A man who is to educate really well, and who is to make the young grow and develop into their full stature, must be filled through and through with the spirit of reverence. It is reverence toward others that is lacking in those who advocate machine-made, cast-iron systems—militarism, capitalism, Fabian scientific organization, and all the other prisons into which reformers and reactionaries try to force the human spirit. In education, with its codes of rules emanating from a government office, with its large classes and fixed curriculum and overworked teachers, with its determination to produce a dead level of glib mediocrity, the lack of reverence for the child is all but universal. Reverence requires imagination and vital warmth; it requires most imagination in respect of those who have least actual achievement or power. The child is weak and superficially foolish; the teacher is strong, and, in an everyday sense, wiser than the child. The teacher without reverence, or the bureaucrat without reverence, easily despises the child for these outward inferiorities. He thinks it his duty to “mold” the child; in imagination he is the potter with the clay. And so he gives to the child some unnatural shape which hardens with age, producing strains and spiritual dissatisfactions out of which grow cruelty and envy and the belief that others must be compelled to undergo the same distortions.

The man who has reverence will not think it his duty to “mold” the young. He feels in all that lives, but especially in human beings, and most of all in children, something sacred, indefinable, unlimited, something individual and strangely precious, the growing principle of life, an embodied fragment of the dumb striving of the world. In the presence of a child he feels an unaccountable humility—a humility not easily defensible on any rational ground, and yet somehow nearer to

wisdom than the easy self-confidence of many parents and teachers. The outward helplessness of the child and the appeal of dependence make him conscious of the responsibility of a trust. His imagination shows him what the child may become, for good or evil; how its impulses may be developed or thwarted, how its hopes must be dimmed and the life in it grow less living, how its trust will be bruised and its quick desires replaced by brooding will. All this gives him a longing to help the child in its own battle; he would equip and strengthen it, not for some outside end proposed by the State or by any other impersonal authority, but for the ends which the child's own spirit is obscurely seeking. The man who feels this can wield the authority of an educator without infringing the principle of liberty.

It is not in a spirit of reverence that education is conducted by States and churches and the great institutions that are subservient to them. What is considered in education is hardly ever the boy or girl, the young man or young woman, but almost always, in some form, the maintenance of the existing order. When the individual is considered, it is almost exclusively with a view to worldly success—making money or achieving a good position. To be ordinary, and to acquire the art of getting on, is the ideal which is set before the youthful mind, except by a few rare teachers who have enough energy of belief to break through the system within which they are expected to work. Almost all education has a political motive: it aims at strengthening some group, national or religious or even social, in the competition with other groups. It is this motive, in the main, which determines the subjects taught, the knowledge offered, and the knowledge withheld, and also decides what mental habits the pupils are expected to acquire. Hardly anything is done to foster the inward growth of mind and spirit; in fact, those who have had most education are very often atrophied in their mental and spiritual life, devoid of impulse, and possessing only certain mechanical aptitudes which take the place of living thought.

Some of the things which education achieves at present must continue to be achieved by education in any civilized country. All children must continue to be taught how to read and write, and some must continue to acquire the knowledge needed for such professions as medicine or law or engineering. The higher education required for the sciences and the arts is necessary for those to whom it is suited. Except in such matters as history and religion, the actual instruction is only inadequate, not positively harmful. The instruction might be given in a more liberal spirit, with more attempt to show its ultimate uses; and, of course, much of it is traditional and dead. But in the main it is necessary and would have to form a part of any educational system.

It is in history and religion and other controversial subjects that the actual instruction is positively harmful. These subjects touch the interests by which schools are maintained, and the interests maintain the schools in order that certain views on these subjects may be instilled. History, in every country, is so taught as to magnify that country: children learn to believe that their own country has been always in the right and almost always victorious, that it has produced almost all the great men, and that it is in all respects superior to all other countries. Since these beliefs are flattering, they are easily absorbed and hardly ever dislodged from instinct by later knowledge.

To take a simple and almost trivial example: the facts about the Battle of Waterloo are known in great detail and with minute accuracy; but the facts as taught in elementary schools will be widely different in England, France, and Germany. The ordinary English boy imagines that the Prussians played hardly any part; the ordinary German boy imagines that Wellington was practically defeated when the day was retrieved by Blücher's gallantry. If the facts were taught accurately in both countries, national pride would not be fostered to the same extent, neither nation would feel so cer-

tain of victory in the event of war, and the willingness to fight would be diminished. It is this result which has to be prevented. Every State wishes to promote national pride and is conscious that this cannot be done by unbiased history. The defenseless children are taught by distortions and suppressions and suggestions. The false ideas as to the history of the world which are taught in the various countries are of a kind which encourages strife and serves to keep alive a bigoted nationalism. If good relations between States were desired, one of the first steps ought to be to submit all teaching of history to an international commission, which should produce neutral textbooks free from the patriotic bias which is now demanded everywhere.

Exactly the same thing applies to religion. Elementary schools are practically always in the hands, either of some religious body, or of a State which has a definite attitude toward religion. A religious body exists through the fact that its members all have certain definite beliefs on subjects as to which the truth is not ascertainable. Schools conducted by religious bodies have to prevent the young, who are often inquiring by nature, from discovering that these definite beliefs are opposed by others which are no more unreasonable, and that many of the men best qualified to judge think that there is no good evidence in favor of any definite belief. When the State is militantly secular, as in France, State schools become as dogmatic as those that are in the hands of the churches; I understand that the word "God" must not be mentioned in a French elementary school. The result in all these cases is the same—free inquiry is checked, and on the most important matter in the world the child is met with dogma or with stony silence.

It is not only in elementary education that these evils exist. In more advanced education they take subtler forms, and there is more attempt to conceal them, but they are still present. Eton and Oxford set a certain stamp upon a man's mind, just as a Jesuit college does. It can hardly be said that Eton and Oxford have a conscious purpose, but they have a purpose

which is none the less strong and effective for not being formulated. In almost all who have been through them, they produce a worship of "good form" which is as destructive to life and thought as the medieval Church. "Good form" is quite compatible with superficial open-mindedness, a readiness to hear all sides, and a certain urbanity toward opponents. But it is not compatible with fundamental open-mindedness, or with any inward readiness to give weight to the other side. Its essence is the assumption that what is most important is a certain kind of behavior—a behavior which minimizes friction between equals, and delicately impresses inferiors with a conviction of their own crudity. As a political weapon for preserving the privileges of the rich in a snobbish democracy, it is unsurpassable. As a means of producing an agreeable social *milieu* for those who have money with no strong beliefs or unusual desires, it has some merit. In every other respect, it is abominable.

The evils of "good form" arise from two sources: its perfect assurance of its own rightness, and its belief that correct manners are more to be desired than intellect or artistic creation or vital energy, or any of the other sources of progress in the world. Perfect assurance, by itself, is enough to destroy all mental progress in those who have it. And when it is combined with contempt for the angularities and awkwardnesses that are almost invariably associated with great mental power, it becomes a source of destruction to all who come in contact with it. "Good form" is itself dead and incapable of growth; and by its attitude to those who are without it, it spreads its own death to many who might otherwise have life. The harm which it has done to well-to-do Englishmen, and to men whose abilities have led the well-to-do to notice them, is incalculable.

The prevention of free inquiry is unavoidable so long as the purpose of education is to produce belief rather than thought, to compel the young to hold positive opinions on doubtful matters rather than to let them see the doubtfulness and be

encouraged to independence of mind. Education ought to foster the wish for truth, not the conviction that some particular creed is the truth. But it is creeds that hold men together in fighting organizations—churches, States, political parties. It is intensity of belief in a creed that produces efficiency in fighting; victory comes to those who feel the strongest certainty about matters on which doubt is the only rational attitude. To produce this intensity of belief and this efficiency in fighting, the child's nature is warped and its free outlook is cramped by cultivating inhibitions as a check to the growth of new ideas. In those whose minds are not very active, the result is the omnipotence of prejudice; while the few whose thought cannot be wholly killed become cynical, intellectually hopeless, destructively critical, able to make all that is living seem foolish, unable to supply themselves the creative impulses which they destroy in others.

The success in fighting which is achieved by suppressing freedom of thought is brief and very worthless. In the long run mental vigor is as essential to success as it is to a good life. The conception of education as a form of drill, a means of producing unanimity through slavishness, is very common, and is defended chiefly on the ground that it leads to victory. Those who enjoy parallels from ancient history will point to the victory of Sparta over Athens to enforce their moral. But it is Athens that has had power over men's thoughts and imaginations, not Sparta; any one of us, if we could be born again into some past epoch, would rather be born an Athenian than a Spartan. And in the modern world so much intellect is required in practical affairs that even the external victory is more likely to be won by intelligence than by docility. Education in credulity leads by quick stages to mental decay; it is only by keeping alive the spirit of free inquiry that the indispensable minimum of progress can be achieved.

Certain mental habits are commonly instilled by those who are engaged in educating—obedience and discipline, ruthlessness

in the struggle for worldly success, contempt toward opposing groups, and an unquestioning credulity, a passive acceptance of the teacher's wisdom. All these habits are against life. Instead of obedience and discipline, we ought to aim at preserving independence and impulse. Instead of ruthlessness, education should try to develop justice in thought. Instead of contempt, it ought to instill reverence and the attempt at understanding; toward the opinions of others it ought to produce, not necessarily acquiescence, but only such opposition as is combined with imaginative apprehension and a clear realization of the grounds for opposition. Instead of credulity, the object should be to stimulate constructive doubt, the love of mental adventure, the sense of worlds to conquer by enterprise and boldness in thought. Contentment with the *status quo* and subordination of the individual pupil to political aims, owing to the indifference to the things of the mind, are the immediate causes of these evils; but beneath these causes there is one more fundamental, the fact that education is treated as a means of acquiring power over the pupil, not as a means of nourishing his own growth. It is in this that lack of reverence shows itself; and it is only by more reverence that a fundamental reform can be effected.

Obedience and discipline are supposed to be indispensable if order is to be kept in a class, and if any instruction is to be given. To some extent, this is true; but the extent is much less than it is thought to be by those who regard obedience and discipline as in themselves desirable. Obedience, the yielding of one's will to outside direction, is the counterpart of authority. Both may be necessary in certain cases. Refractory children, lunatics, and criminals may require authority, and may need to be forced to obey. But in so far as this is necessary, it is a misfortune; what is to be desired is the free choice of ends with which it is not necessary to interfere. And educational reformers have shown that this is far more possible than our fathers would ever have believed.

What makes obedience seem necessary in schools is the large classes and overworked teachers demanded by a false economy. Those who have no experience of teaching are incapable of imagining the expense of spirit entailed by any really living instruction. They think that teachers can reasonably be expected to work as many hours as bank clerks. The result is intense fatigue, irritable nerves, an absolute necessity of performing the day's task mechanically. But the task cannot be performed mechanically except by exacting obedience.

If we took education seriously, if we thought it as important to keep alive the minds of children as to secure victory in war, we should conduct education quite differently; we should make sure of achieving the end, even if the expense were a hundred-fold greater than it is. To many men and women a small amount of teaching is a delight, and can be done with a fresh zest and life which keeps most pupils interested without any need of discipline. The few who do not become interested might be separated from the rest and given a different kind of instruction. A teacher ought to have only as much teaching as can be done, on most days, with actual pleasure in the work and with an awareness of the pupil's mental needs. The result would be a relation of friendliness instead of hostility between teacher and pupil, a realization on the part of most pupils that education serves to develop their own lives and is not merely an outside imposition, interfering with play and demanding many hours of sitting still. All that is necessary to this end is a greater expenditure of money, to secure teachers with more leisure and with a natural love of teaching.

Discipline, as it exists in schools, is very largely an evil. There is a kind of discipline which is necessary to almost all achievement, and which is perhaps not sufficiently valued by those who react against the purely external discipline of traditional methods. The desirable kind of discipline is the kind which comes from within, which consists in the power of pursuing a distant object steadily, foregoing and suffering many

things on the way. This involves the subordination of impulse to will, the power of directing action by large creative desires even at moments when they are not vividly alive. Without this, no serious ambition, good or bad, can be realized, no consistent purpose can dominate. This kind of discipline is very necessary. But this kind can result only from strong desires for ends not immediately attainable and can be produced only by education if education fosters such desires, which it seldom does at present. Such discipline springs from one's own will, not from outside authority. It is not this kind which is sought in most schools, and it is not this kind which seems to me an evil.

Although elementary education encourages the undesirable discipline that consists in passive obedience, and although hardly any existing education encourages the moral discipline of consistent self-direction, there is a certain kind of purely mental discipline which is produced by the traditional higher education. The kind I mean is that which enables a man to concentrate his thoughts at will upon any matter that he has occasion to consider, regardless of preoccupations or boredom or intellectual difficulty. This quality, though it has no important intrinsic excellence, greatly enhances the efficiency of the mind as an instrument. It is this that enables a lawyer to master the scientific details of a patent case which he forgets as soon as judgment has been given, or a civil servant to deal quickly with many different administrative questions in succession. It is this that enables men to forget private cares during business hours. In a complicated world it is a very necessary faculty for those whose work requires mental concentration.

Success in producing mental discipline is the chief merit of traditional higher education. I doubt whether it can be achieved except by compelling or persuading active attention to a prescribed task. It is for this reason chiefly that I do not believe methods such as Madame Montessori's applicable when the age of childhood has been passed. The essence of her

method consists in giving a choice of occupations, any one of which is interesting to most children, and all of which are instructive. The child's attention is wholly spontaneous, as in play; it enjoys acquiring knowledge in this way, and does not acquire any knowledge which it does not desire. I am convinced that this is the best method of education with young children; the actual results make it almost impossible to think otherwise. But it is difficult to see how this method can lead to control of attention by the will. Many things which must be thought about are uninteresting, and even those that are interesting at first often become very wearisome before they have been considered as long as is necessary. The power of giving prolonged attention is very important, and it is hardly to be widely acquired except as a habit induced originally by outside pressure. Some few boys, it is true, have sufficiently strong intellectual desires to be willing to undergo all that is necessary by their own initiative and free will; but for all others an external inducement is required in order to make them learn any subject thoroughly. There is among educational reformers a certain fear of demanding great efforts, and in the world at large a growing unwillingness to be bored. Both these tendencies have their good sides, but both also have their dangers. The mental discipline which is jeopardized can be preserved by mere advice without external compulsion whenever a boy's intellectual interest and ambition can be sufficiently stimulated. A good teacher ought to be able to do this for any boy who is capable of much mental achievement; and for many of the others the present purely bookish education is probably not the best. In this way, so long as the importance of mental discipline is realized, it can probably be attained, whenever it is attainable, by appealing to the pupil's consciousness of his own needs. So long as teachers are not expected to succeed by this method, it is easy for them to slip into a slothful dullness, and blame their pupils when the fault is really their own.

Ruthlessness in the economic struggle will almost unavoid-

ably be taught in schools so long as the economic structure of society remains unchanged. This must be particularly the case in middle-class schools, which depend for their numbers upon the good opinion of parents, and secure that good opinion by advertising the success of their pupils. This is one of many ways in which the competitive organization of the State is harmful. Spontaneous and disinterested desire for knowledge is not at all uncommon in the young, and might be easily aroused in many in whom it remains latent. But it is remorselessly checked by teachers who think only of examinations, diplomas, and degrees. For the abler boys, there is no time for thought, no time for the indulgence of intellectual taste, from the moment of first going to school until the moment of leaving the university. From first to last there is nothing but one long drudgery of examination tips and textbook facts. The most intelligent, at the end, are disgusted with learning, longing only to forget it and to escape into a life of action. Yet there, as before, the economic machine holds them prisoners, and all their spontaneous desires are bruised and thwarted.

The examination system, and the fact that instruction is treated mainly as training for a livelihood, leads the young to regard knowledge, from a purely utilitarian point of view, as the road to money, not as the gateway to wisdom. This would not matter so much if it affected only those who have no genuine intellectual interests. But unfortunately it affects most those whose intellectual interests are strongest, since it is upon them that the pressure of examinations falls with most severity. To them most, but to all in some degree, education appears as a means of acquiring superiority over others; it is infected through and through with ruthlessness and glorification of social inequality. Any free disinterested consideration shows that, whatever inequalities might remain in a Utopia, the actual inequalities are almost all contrary to justice. But our educational system tends to conceal this from all except the

failures, since those who succeed are on the way to profit by the inequalities, with every encouragement from the men who have directed their education.

Passive acceptance of the teacher's wisdom is easy to most boys and girls. It involves no effort of independent thought and seems rational because the teacher knows more than his pupils; it is, moreover, the way to win the favor of the teacher unless he is a very exceptional man. Yet the habit of passive acceptance is a disastrous one in later life. It causes men to seek a leader, and to accept as a leader whoever is established in that position. It makes the power of churches, governments, party caucuses, and all the other organizations by which plain men are misled into supporting old systems which are harmful to the nation and to themselves. It is possible that there would not be much independence of thought, even if education did everything to promote it; but there would certainly be more than there is at present. If the object were to make pupils think, rather than to make them accept certain conclusions, education would be conducted quite differently; there would be less rapidity of instruction, more discussion, more occasions when pupils were encouraged to express themselves, more attempt to make education concern itself with matters in which the pupils felt some interest.

Above all, there would be an endeavor to rouse and stimulate the love of mental adventure. The world in which we live is various and astonishing; some of the things which seem plainest grow more and more difficult the more they are considered; other things, which might have been thought quite impossible to discover, have nevertheless been laid bare by the genius and industry of the men of science. The powers of thought, the vast regions which it can master, the much more vast regions which it can only dimly suggest to imagination, give to those whose minds have traveled beyond the daily round an amazing richness of material, an escape from the triviality and wearisomeness of familiar routine, by which the whole of life is

filled with interest, and the prison walls of the commonplace are broken down. The same love of adventure which takes men to the South Pole, the same passion for a conclusive trial of strength which leads some men to welcome war, can find in creative thought an outlet which is neither wasteful nor cruel, but increases the dignity of man, incarnating in life some of that shining splendor which the human spirit is bringing down out of the unknown. To give this joy, in a greater or less measure, to all who are capable of it, is the supreme end for which the education of the mind is to be valued.

It will be said that the joy of mental adventure must be rare, that there are few who can appreciate it, and that ordinary education can take no account of so aristocratic a good. I do not believe this. The joy of mental adventure is far commoner in the young than in grown men and women. Among children it is very common, and grows naturally out of the period of make-believe and fancy. It is rare in later life because everything is done to kill it during education. Men fear thought as they fear nothing else on earth—more than ruin, more even than death. Thought is subversive and revolutionary, destructive and terrible; thought is merciless to privilege, established institutions, and comfortable habits; thought is anarchic and lawless, indifferent to authority, careless of the well-tryed wisdom of the ages. Thought looks into the pit of hell and is not afraid. It sees man, a feeble speck, surrounded by unfathomable depths of silence; yet it bears itself proudly, as unmoved as if it were lord of the universe. Thought is great and swift and free, the light of the world, and the chief glory of man.

But if thought is to become the possession of many, not the privilege of the few, we must have done with fear. It is fear that holds men back—fear lest their cherished beliefs should prove delusions, fear lest the institutions by which they live should prove harmful, fear lest they themselves should prove less worthy of respect than they have supposed themselves to

be. "Should the working man think freely about property? Then what will become of us, the rich? Should young men and young women think freely about sex? Then what will become of morality? Should soldiers think freely about war? Then what will become of military discipline? Away with thought! Back into the shades of prejudice, lest property, morals, and war should be endangered! Better that men should be stupid, slothful, and oppressive than that their thoughts should be free. For if their thoughts were free, they might not think as we do. And at all costs this disaster must be averted." So the opponents of thought argue in the unconscious depths of their souls. And so they act in their churches, their schools, and their universities.

No institution inspired by fear can further life. Hope, not fear, is the creative principle in human affairs. All that has made man great has sprung from the attempt to secure what is good, not from the struggle to avert what was thought evil. It is because modern education is so seldom inspired by a great hope that it so seldom achieves a great result. The wish to preserve the past, rather than the hope of creating the future, dominates the minds of those who control the teaching of the young. Education should not aim at a passive awareness of dead facts, but at an activity directed toward the world that our efforts are to create. It should be inspired, not by a regretful hankering after the extinct beauties of Greece and the Renaissance, but by a shining vision of the society that is to be, of the triumphs that thought will achieve in the time to come, and of the ever-widening horizon of man's survey over the universe. Those who are taught in this spirit will be filled with life and hope and joy, able to bear their part in bringing to mankind a future less somber than the past, with faith in the glory that human effort can create.

CARL VAN DOREN

Carl Van Doren's refreshing essay about the essay, reprinted here, might well stand as an introduction to this book, so successfully does it penetrate the nature of this most elusive of literary forms. In its clarity and simplicity it is typical of Dr. Van Doren's work as a literary critic.

Born in 1885 at Hope, Illinois, Dr. Van Doren was graduated from the University of Illinois and took a Ph.D. degree at Columbia. From 1907 to 1916 he was a member of the English department at the University of Illinois, resigning to become an Associate in English at Columbia, where he now is. From 1919 to 1922 he was literary editor of *The Nation*; from 1922 to 1925 he held a similar position on *The Century Magazine*.

Although he has written poetry and a novel, *The Ninth Wave* (1926), his province is literary criticism, especially of American authors. His *Contemporary American Novelists* (1922), *The Roving Critic* (1923), *Many Minds* (1924), and *Other Provinces* (1925) have importantly influenced the literary taste of American readers. For four years he was engaged in editing *The Cambridge History of American Literature* (1921). *American and British Literature Since 1890* (1925), written in collaboration with his brother, Mark Van Doren, offers the student of contemporary literature a useful and very readable introduction to his subject.

A NOTE ON THE ESSAY*

CARL VAN DOREN

The sonnet has a standard form very much as a man has. Leave off the sestet of your sonnet and you do about what a god does when he leaves the legs off a man. The drama has a standard form very much as a rendezvous has. Write a drama in which no spark is exchanged between the audience and the action, and you have done what fate does when it keeps lovers from their meeting. The novel has a standard form very much as a road has. You may set out anywhere you like and go wherever you please, at any gait, but you must go somewhere, or you have made what is no more a novel than some engineer's road would be a road if it had neither beginning, end, nor direction. But the essay! It may be of any length, breadth, depth, weight, density, color, savor, odor, appearance, importance, value, or uselessness which you can or will give it. The epigram bounds it on one side and the treatise on the other, but it has in its time encroached upon the territory of both of them, and it doubtless will do so again. Or, to look at the essay from another angle, it is bounded on one side by the hell-fire sermon and on the other by the geometrical demonstration; and yet it ranges easily between these extremes of heat and cold and occasionally steals from both of them. It differs from a letter by being written to more—happily a great many more—than one person. It differs from talk chiefly by being written at all.

Having to obey no regulations as to form, the essay is very free to choose its matter. The sonnet, by reason of its form, tends to deal with solemn and not with gay themes. The

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drama, for the same reason, tends to look for intense and not for casual incidents. The novel tends to feel that it must carry a considerable amount of human life on its back. The essay may be as fastidious as a collector of carved emeralds or as open-minded as a garbage-gatherer. Nothing human, as the platitude says, is alien to it. The essay, however, goes beyond the platitude and dares to choose matter from numerous non-human sources. Think of the naturalists and their essays. Think, further, of the range of topics for essayists at large. Theodore Roosevelt in an essay urges the strenuous life; Max Beerbohm in an essay defends cosmetics. De Quincey expounds the fine art of murder, Thoreau the pleasures of economy, William Law the blisses of prayer, Hudson the sense of smell in men and in animals, Schopenhauer the ugliness of women, Bacon the advantages of a garden, Plutarch the traits of curiosity, and A. C. Benson the felicity of having nothing much in the mind. All, in fact, an essayist needs to start with is something, anything, to say. He gets up each morning and finds the world spread out before him, as the world was spread out before Adam and Eve the day they left paradise. With the cosmos, past, present, and future, to pick from, the essayist goes to work. If he finds a topic good enough he may write a good essay, no matter how he writes it.

He may. There is still, however, the question of his manner. Thousands of dull men have written millions of true things which no one but their proof-readers, wives, or pupils ever read. If each essayist could take out a patent on each subject into which he dips his pen, and could prevent any other pen from ever dipping into it after him, he might have better luck. But there are no monopolists in this department. Would research find in all the hoards of books or all the morgues of manuscripts a single observation which has never been made twice? Competition in such affairs is free and endless. The only law which gives an essayist a right to his material is the law which rules that the best man wins. The law does not

say in what fashion he must be best. Any fashion will do. Let him be more sententious, like Bacon; or more harmonious, like Sir Thomas Browne; or more elegant, like Addison; or more direct, like Swift; or more hearty, like Fielding; or more whimsical, like Lamb; or more impassioned, like Hazlitt; or more encouraging, like Emerson; or more Olympian, like Arnold; or more funny, like Mark Twain; or more musical, like Pater; or more impish, like Max Beerbohm; or more devastating, like Mencken. Let the essayist be any of these things and he may have a copyright till someone takes it away from him. What matters is the manner. If he has good matter, he *may* write a good essay; if he has a good manner he probably *will* write a good essay.

An essay is a communication. If the subject of the discourse were the whole affair, it would be enough for the essayist to be an adequate conduit. If the manner were the whole affair, any versatile fellow might try all the manners and have a universal triumph. But back of matter and manner both lies the item which is really significant. The person who communicates anything in any way must be a person. His truth must have a tone, his speech must have a rhythm which are his and solely his. His knowledge or opinions must have lain long enough inside him to have taken root there; and when they come away they must bring some of the soil clinging to them. They must, too, have been shaped by that soil—as plants are which grow in cellars, on housetops, on hillsides, in the wide fields, under shade in forests. Many kinds of men, many kinds of essays! Important essays come from important men.

"A WORKER"

The author of this challenging analysis of the industrial system which appeared originally in *The New Republic* prefers, for obvious reasons, to preserve his anonymity. That the authenticity of his story is beyond doubt may be judged from the fact that a letter addressed to him, requesting permission to reprint the essay, was answered, in part, as follows:

"I should have answered your note before, had I had the stamp necessary to convey my answer you-wards. I suppose it must be hard for you to imagine a stamp as unattainable, but you see my article was quite literally true."

ON THE INDUSTRIAL SCRAP HEAP*

"A WORKER"

I am—or rather was—cheap labor, the kind which is so largely in demand by industrial corporations and many advocates of unrestricted immigration. I am the kind of man that you see from the windows of trains working with a pick and shovel or lifting pig iron into railroad cars. I wear as a usual thing overalls and a blue or khaki flannel shirt, brogans, and underwear and socks according to the state of my pocketbook.

But I always wear them on Sundays. To cheap labor socks and underwear are luxuries, not necessities. Until recently I was a little cog—not perhaps so important as a cog, more like a rivet—in the huge industrial machine. Even as late as May I held my place as a rivet, but since then I have been junked, tossed aside on the industrial scrap heap and, not because my case is unique but because it is entirely typical, I should like to make people understand *how* cheap labor gets scrapped, and what it thinks about scrapping.

My mother died when I was two years old, of consumption and too many babies. My father was even cheaper labor than I have been, so that he was quite unable to bring up a family of five adequately. My earliest recollections are of working—of long days under a fiery sun, struggling with a hoe twice as tall as I. I was eight or nine then. When I was twelve, I went into the coal mines and worked full shifts underground. Black days these were, when the chambers were sometimes full of the voices of the coal and sometimes, in spite of our human activity, silent with a silence more terrifying than even the unhuman voices.

*From *The New Republic*, August 15, 1923. Reprinted by permission of the author and the publishers.

When I was fifteen I came out of the mines and went to saw-logging, which is heavy work even for grown men. The days with the hoe stooped my shoulders and hollowed my chest. The days in the coal filled my lungs with the fine black dust which sooner or later gets nearly every miner. The saw-logging enlarged my heart far beyond its natural size. Of course I did not know what I was doing to myself, but if I had, it would have made no difference. Father was cheap labor, and his boys had to look after themselves. Also none of us was ever properly fed. The reason for this was twofold. First, we did not have money enough to buy anything but the very cheapest and coarsest food and second, even if we had, we would not have known what proper food consisted of. The food we did have undernourished me and ruined my digestion.

All these things together have landed me on the scrap heap at the ripe age of twenty-six. The doctors say that in time I may not be altogether useless if I take care of myself. But think of it! At twenty-six, when, according to the apostles of labor, I should be going forth as a strong man rejoicing to run a race, I am bent, broken, cast aside. Since I have survived so far, it is quite on the cards that I shall go on living for at least another twenty-six years, though how I am to live or what is to become of my family is as yet unrevealed to me, and it is quite possible that ignorance in this case is bliss.

Since I have been rusting here on the scrap heap, I have had time to think over what I have read, and I have come to certain conclusions, first and foremost of which is this: The industrial system is, economically speaking, wasteful of its human material and, humanely speaking, criminally negligent. If I were an exception instead of being a fair sample of the rule, I would say nothing against the industrial system. If the scrap heap were even a small one, I should still say nothing, but it is large, larger than one would believe, and besides those of us who are actually, so to speak, in residence there, there are others who in another walk of life would be considered too ill to work, but

who are working and "doctoring" at the same time, vainly hoping to stave off the scrap heap until some miracle enables them to save enough to keep them from depending on the Charities, Federated, or Associated, or United, as the case may be.

We on the scrap heap do not dread poverty, nor cold in moderation, nor even hunger in moderation. All these things are so much a part of our daily lives that they are as unquestioned as the weather. What we dread is charity. Bread that we do not buy for ourselves but that is bought for us by others. Let me tell you that there is infinitely more joy over a sack of coal gleaned from the railroad track than over a ton donated by one of the many well-meaning societies trying to repair the damage done by the system to which they owe at once their existence and their reason for existing.

To go back, however, to my charges against the industrial system of waste and negligence—still considering myself as a sample, I beg of you to look at me. For eighteen years I have been a producer, but only for the last eight has my production obtained any appreciable value. Now, at the very time when my output should be at its maximum, it is cut off completely. Instead of being a producer I am a consumer—with nothing that I can pay for what I consume. Instead of supporting the system I am a dead weight on its back. Instead of my contributing to it for the next twenty-five or thirty years (and surely a man of twenty-six should be able to look forward to at least twenty-five more years of productiveness), it will in all probability have to contribute to me indirectly. And it serves it right, for it has squandered me. It took my least instead of my most productive years and in so doing it wasted me.

Let me digress a little. In my mind the State and the system are to a certain degree differentiated. Practically all of us are members of both State and system. The difference lies in this. As members of the State we are equal—one man is like another man (theoretically at least). As members of the system we are entirely unequal—our values differ. Just as each citizen is

responsible for the well-being of the State, so the State is, or should be, responsible for the well-being of each citizen. If it is not responsible sooner, it will have to be later. If it had been sooner, my value to the State would more than have repaid my cost to the State. As it is, the reverse is the case. Instead of the State's saving me, the system has squandered me and now the State—that is, organized society—will have to look after me with money paid to it by the system.

I am entitled to this help from the State for two reasons: first, because it is the system's fault that I am junk, and second, because part of the money which the system pays to the State should have been paid to me. Had it been paid to me sooner, it would probably have enabled me to avoid the scrap heap. And certainly I would infinitely prefer taking my pay in the form of money justly paid to me for value received than in the form of charity bestowed upon the deserving poor. I believe that both State and system would, in the long run, have found it cheaper.

So much for the economic side of it. Now for the humane. I have already said that I started in working at night. I had no schooling, but grew to early manhood physically weakened and mentally untrained. My pleasures were very few and of the crudest, but such as they were, they were all I could find. Not until I met my wife did I have even the vaguest conception of what a life could hold. I knew no books save an occasional Jesse James read to me by my sister-in-law. I knew nothing about the theater—not even what it was. Underclothes were luxuries. Newspapers were principally useful to line shelves. I had heard of Lincoln and Washington, but not of Columbus or Shakespeare. As far as I was aware, Europe was one of the United States and the United States itself a monarchy. Hard work, poor meals, an occasional drinking or gambling spree, and once in a while a revival meeting or a fight made up my life for years. After I met my wife came three years of awakening mind, three years of struggle against industrial depression

and increasing ill-health. Then just when there seemed a chance for steady work and a little mild prosperity—and by prosperity I mean enough food of the right kind and enough clothes of any kind—just when I had learned to appreciate the things that made life worth living came the scrap heap—not through my fault but through the negligence of a system that while constantly calling for labor—*cheap* labor, pick-and-shovel men, concrete men, pig-iron lifters, etc., etc., does not look after the labor it already has, but right and left squanders it and relegates it to the scrap heap even as I am relegated. Next I suppose will come the separation of the family. The State will send me to some hospital, my babies will go to a nursery, and my wife back again to work. This is the portion of cheap labor.

Everywhere throughout the paper have kept
uniform in style

The design is formed by so many elements
that it is hard for me to trace what they
have offered

In the early 1840s Humboldt is visiting
the north of the south; arrived by the
opening of a large first part of the
which had accumulated in the
waters, along with many other things
articles

DATE DUE SLIP

[illegible]

1. Simile (like)
2. Metaphor (is)
3. Allegory (extended metaphor)
4. Personification (life to inanimate)
5. Apostrophe - (life to - address person)
6. Allusion (familiar name)
7. Epithet (title)
8. Onomatopoeia - (sound of words)
9. Metonymy (thing = part of it)
10. Antithesis (balance)
11. Climax. - (word $\nearrow$)
12. Ant. climax ($\searrow$)
13. Repetition (for emphasis)
14. Parallelism (same idea - diff. w.)
15. Rhetorical question (no answer)
16. Exclamation (emotion - surprise)
17. Alliteration (series same sound)
18. Hyperbole (exaggeration)

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